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CHURCH AND THE WORLD:

THEIR MUTUAL RELATIONS;
GOD'S RETRIBUTIVE RIGHTEOUSNESS
TOWARDS THEM THE
KEY TO SACRED HISTORY, PAST, PRESENT,
AND TO COME.

BY

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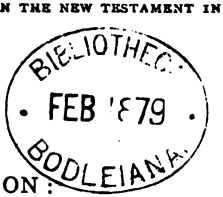

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TO

MY EVER-SYMPATHIZING HELPER

IN LITERARY, AS IN EVERY OTHER WORK,

MY BELOVED WIFE,

AGNES ANTONIA,

THIS FRUIT OF MUCH RESEARCH IN HOLY WRIT

IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

BY HER HUSBAND

THE AUTHOR.

March 13, 1878.

SYLLABUS OF LECTURES.

THE CHURCH AND THE WORLD.

Their Mutual Relations;
God's Retributive Righteousness towards them the Key to Sacred History, past, present, and to come.

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THE

CHURCH AND THE WORLD.

I.

THE CHURCH'S HIGH CALLING OF GOD OUT OF THE WORLD.

Adam's wife 'bare a son, and called his name Seth: For God, said she, hath appointed me another seed instead of Abel, whom Cain slew: And to Seth, to him also was born a son: and he called his name Enos. Then began men to call upon the name of the Lord' (Gen. iv. 25, 26).

WE have in these words the account of the first beginnings of the Church of God. The root idea of the word implies a *calling out* of the people of Jehovah from the people of the world around. The Hebrew *Quahal* [קָהָל], 'the congregation,' is evidently akin to *Quol* [קוֹל], *a voice calling:* and *Quoheleth* [קֹהֶלֶת], *Ecclesiastes, the Preacher*, or *Gatherer* of the congregation. The Greek for 'church' (*ἐκκλησία*, from *ἐκκαλεῖν*), similarly means a body called out. At the very time when the

race of Cain was laying the foundations of the Kingdom of the World, it pleased God, according to His eternal purpose of grace, to inaugurate the Kingdom of God among the descendants of Seth. The protevangelical promise, 'I will put enmity between thee (the serpent) and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed' (Gen. iii. 15), began now to develope itself. Already righteous Abel had fallen a victim to the God-hating enmity of the serpent's seed. Cain and his descendants after 'going out from the presence of Jehovah,' proceeded to lay the basis of this world's mundane civilization by building a city and by the invention of implements of brass and iron, and instruments of music, and by the introduction of nomadic life. With Lamech began the system of polygamy, as fatal to the well-being of the family, as it is opposed to the original marriage laws of God. Homicide speedily followed: and Lamech, relying on the power which Tubalcain's discovery of bronze and steel gave him, calculated on impunity: 'If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, Lamech will be avenged seventy and sevenfold' (Gen. iv. 24). Or in the view of Keil and Delitzsch, and Bishop Harold Browne: Amidst the lawless disregard of the sanctity of human life on all sides, Lamech boasts to his wives none can hurt him, 'for I

slay a man, if he woundeth me, even a young man, if he hurteth me.' The very inventions which God had designed for man's subjugation of the earth, as its destined lord, were perverted by sin to proud independence of God and deification of self.

At this juncture Seth was born. His name means [שֵׁת from שָׁת] 'the appointed one:' 'for (said Eve) God hath appointed me another seed for Abel, because Cain slew him.' What wicked Cain took, that the mighty Elohim restored. Seth in his turn begat a son; and realizing man's frailty, Seth named him Enos [אֱנוֹשׁ frail]. It is most significant that it was at this point when the godly seed of men acknowledged their utter *frailty* and inability to work out their own redemption, in contrast to the self-deifying arrogance and pride of power and knowledge on the part of Cain's race, that 'then began men to call on the name of Jehovah.'

Let us consider now *Jehovah's calling of the Church.* In the next discourse I hope to consider *the Church's calling on the name of Jehovah.*

Three epochs in Jehovah's calling of the Church are prominently marked in Holy Scripture :— I. His call of the Patriarchal Church; II. That of Israel; III. That of the New Testament.

Jehovah's calling of the Church comes first. For man was universally fallen. God had created him in His own image originally. But man by sin had lost that image. Self had become his object of worship, enthroned in the heart where God once reigned supreme. Selfishness, self-will, and self-dependence had become the law of his fallen nature; and these constitute the root-principle of sin: for 'sin is the transgression of the law' of God (1 John iii. 4). So it is with deep significancy written (Gen. v. 1, 3) first that 'God created man in the likeness of God,' and then 'Adam begat a son in his own likeness, after his image—Seth.' The first Adam being 'of earth, earthy' (1 Cor. xv. 47) could only transmit an earthy nature: for 'that which is born of the flesh is flesh.' So even Seth, the appointed one, was in his original nature of the flesh fleshly. If there was to be a redemption of the forfeited inheritance, if there was to be a restoration of the lost image of the holy God to man, if man is to 'see God's face with joy,' the first advance must be on God's part towards lost man; God Himself must be the first to 'devise means that His banished ones be not expelled from Him' for ever (2 Sam. xiv. 14).

Accordingly, before ever pronouncing the curse on Eve and Adam and the earth their

home, God first of all announces the promise of redemption to man through 'the Seed of the woman:' 'It shall bruise thy (i.e. the serpent's) head.' Nor was this Divine scheme of redemption an after-thought, which the unforeseen contingency of sin had necessitated. Nay: His 'choice' of us and His 'predestination of us unto the adoption of children' was 'before the foundation of the world:' and His grand ultimate design is His own glory, 'that now unto the principalities and powers in heavenly places, might be known by the Church the manifold wisdom of God, according to the eternal purpose which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord' (Eph. i. 4, 5; iii. 10, 11).

Next after the promise of the Redeemer, who should crush for ever the old serpent, follows the statement that 'Unto Adam and to his wife did Jehovah Elohim make coats of skin and clothed them' (Gen. iii. 21). What they had vainly attempted, namely to cover their nakedness by sewing fig-leaves together as aprons, that God effectually wrought for them by the sacrifice of the innocent animal to provide them with raiment to hide their shame. However we explain this passage, it is strongly probable that God would not have specially interposed to provide man with garments, and to record the fact

in the sacred narrative which is so condensed in its details, unless there were some deep spiritual truth implied. If herein we have the foundation laid by Divine appointment of the law of sacrifice, all is explained. The clothing provided by God through the death of the innocent, substituted for the guilty, vividly taught man by type that his guilt may be transferred to another, and that thereby his shame may become covered out of sight, and himself clothed with the garment of Divine righteousness.* Clothed with this pledge of mercy, man goes forth from paradise into the wilderness not without hope.

Nor is this all. Directly after man's expulsion, 'at the east of Eden, God placed [יַשְׁכֵּן

* This view accords with the similar language of Holy Writ in many passages: as Isa. lxi. 10, 'I will greatly rejoice in Jehovah, for He hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, He hath covered me with the robe of righteousness.' So the 'wedding garment' provided by the King (Matt. xxii. 10), and the 'granting to the Bride that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white—the righteousness of the saints' (Rev. xix. 8). Moreover the Priest had to himself *the skin* of the burnt offering (Lev. vii. 8); an ordinance probably derived from the original appointment of the whole burnt-offering by God in Gen. iii., followed by His clothing the shame of the guilty pair with the skins. See Magee, 'Atonement,' lxiv.; see in contrast to God's covering that of self-deceiving man, Isa. xxviii. 20; xxx. 1. Jesus was stripped that we might be clothed. Jesus bore the shame that we may not be put to everlasting shame (John xix. 23, 24. Rom. ix. 33. Heb. xii. 2).

set as the dwelling-place of the Shekinah glory] the Cherubim and a flaming sword which turned every way to keep the way of life' (Gen. iii. 24). As the flaming sword proclaimed God's just wrath against sin, so the Cherubim represented mercy in store for lost man. They provisionally occupied his destined inheritance for him, and were the pledge of the restoration of man and of the creaturely world closely connected with, and subject to, him. They symbolically foretold his recovery of the Tree of Life. For they 'guarded' it not against, but for him, until the time when he shall have the right to enjoy it, and never to lose it' (Rev. ii. 7; xxii. 14). They were the forerunners of the sanctuary cherubim on either side of the bright Shekinah cloud above the blood-sprinkled mercy-seat, God's meeting-place in reconciliation with sinners. Hence it is that the Cherubim and flaming sword at the east of Eden are designated (Gen. iv. 3, 16) 'the presence of Jehovah.' After the sacrifice of Abel and the offering of Cain 'unto Jehovah,' and the subsequent murder of righteous Abel by his envious brother, 'Cain went out from the presence of Jehovah.' God's placing of the compound human and creaturely Cherubim on the east border of man's inheritance suggested the truth that man, and the creatures involved in

his fall, have still an interest in Eden, and shall recover it, when 'the glory of the God' of the redeemed shall 'come from the way of the East' (Ez. xliii. 2. Rom. viii. 19—23).

God's call of the Church, we have seen, was in *purpose*, before the foundation of the world. The *actual* call was when the worldliness of the descendants of Cain had become so intensified by the pride of growing wealth and the arts of civilization, that there was danger that the godly seed should be absorbed in the same vortex. The history of the Church and the world is one continued series of man's apostasies and God's epiphanies. So God in the case of the first call of the Church as represented by the Sethites, and possibly by a godly remnant among the Cainites, made His epiphany of grace, just when man's apostasy was threatening to sweep away all traces of godliness in one universal corruption. The call of the Church in connexion with the Sethites was the first illustration of this principle. This was the first formal call of the Church in general, and of *the Patriarchal Church* in particular. Soon again evil multiplied itself, and the light of the Church's testimony for God waned. Excepting Enoch, who 'walked with God' (Gen. v. 22—24), and testified amidst abounding wickedness, 'Behold, the Lord cometh

with ten thousand of His saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him' (Jude 14, 15), no witness for God is mentioned in Scripture down to the time of Noah. Then, again, when all flesh had corrupted his way upon the earth, and God in consequence declared His purpose to destroy men with a flood, 'Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord' (Gen. vi.). After the flood God renewed His covenant with Noah and his sons, and their seed, and gave the promise through Noah, that 'Jehovah' would be especially 'the God of Shem' (Gen. ix. 26).

But once more man apostatized. The growing evil culminated in the impious attempt of Ham's descendants on the plain of Shinar to contravene God's command that 'the earth should be divided' (Gen. x. 25, 32): they sought to establish a grand central point of outward unity. It was a tacit acknowledgment that they had lost the inward spiritual bond of unity, love to God, uniting them in love to one another. Their tower mounting up toward heaven and dedicated to the deified Heavens, marks the first era in idolatry. It was also the first attempt to

establish that universal empire on earth which has been vainly sought after by man's ambition ever since, but which shall only be realized by the manifestation of the Son of man, to whom alone the right belongs (Ez. xxi. 27). Divine judgment dispersed most of the rebels, but the city Babel or Babylon thenceforth became the spiritual symbol of the world's power and policy, as contradistinguished from the Church of the living God.

II. Next in order we come to the *Divine call of Israel* in the person of Abraham, the forefather of the promised seed. Here again the first step towards restoring communion between God and man is on the part of God. Had Abraham been left to himself, he would have been an idolater like those around him. Joshua expressly says that Israel's first 'fathers' served 'idols on the other side of the flood' (xxiv. 2, 14). 'Your fathers dwelt on the other side of the flood in old time, even Terah, the father of Abraham, and the father of Nachor: and they served other gods.' Ur of the Chaldees, whence God called him, 'Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee' (Gen. xii. 1), was the most ancient city and capital of the older Chaldea. The people were idolaters

of the heavenly bodies. Its temple was sacred to the Moon goddess.* The call of Abraham thus was altogether of God's grace, not of man's work.

Not to dwell on too many details, let us pass to Israel. God's choice of Jacob, by grace, is marked from the very womb. 'For (reasons St. Paul, Rom. ix. 11) the children being not yet born, neither having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God might stand, not of works, but of him that calleth, it was said unto Rebekah, "The elder shall serve the younger."' The call of Jacob was due to no special merit in Jacob, or demerit in Esau, but to the gratuitous love of God. Yet it was no arbitrary choice; it did not set aside the responsibility of man. Jacob was accepted in his accepting God's prevenient grace, and in choosing the better part; as his dying exclamation expresses, embodying in a sentence the grand ruling principle of his life amidst much alloy of selfishness and imperfection, 'I have waited for Thy salvation, O Jehovah' (Gen. xlix. 18). Esau was rejected

* The temple remains at *Mugheir*, the modern representative of Ur, are thoroughly Chaldean in type, in stages of which two remain, of bricks partly sunburnt, partly baked, and cemented with bitumen; the name *Mugheir*, indeed, means 'mother of bitumen.'

because, notwithstanding superficial attractive qualities, he was the 'profane Esau' who 'despised his birthright,' selling it 'for one morsel of meat' (Gen. xxv. 33, Heb. xii. 16): the one sentence of Holy Scripture, like a sunbeam, revealing at a glance the whole man in his essential godlessness.

God's call of the nation, as of its representative heads, is still more emphatically marked as of grace. It was when they were bondservants in Egypt, degraded in spirit, and conformed to the grovelling idolatries of Egypt, that God called them by Moses, and brought them out of slavery into His free service with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. 'I have chosen thee' (saith Jehovah) 'in the furnace of affliction' (Isa. xlviii. 10). Again in Ez. xvi. 3: 'Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite, and thy mother an Hittite. None eye pitied thee, but thou wast cast out in the open field in the day thou wast born. And when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee, Live. I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness, yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant with thee, and thou becamest mine.' So every time that the Israelite offered before the Lord the first fruits of the earth, he

was directed to confess, 'A Syrian ready to perish was my father, and he went down into Egypt, and sojourned there with a few, and became there a nation great, mighty, and populous: and the Egyptians evil entreated us: and when we cried unto the Lord, the Lord brought us forth out of Egypt, and hath given us this land that floweth with milk and honey' (Deut. xxvi. 5—9). The whole polity of Israel, which was a theocracy, with God as their King, His Divine law their code of jurisprudence, and His special Providence administering the executive with sanctions of immediate temporal rewards and punishments, was based on the recognized principle, that their very existence and continuance as a Church and a nation rested on the gratuitous choice and call of God.

III. Lastly we come to the call of the New Testament Church. As in the former cases, so in this, pre-eminently it was the Lord who called the first heads of the Church to Him, not they who first sought Him. 'Follow Me' was His call to Andrew and Simon, James and John: and His grace made the outer call effectual to their conversion: as He reminds them, 'Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you' (John xv. 16): "No man can come to Me, except the Father which hath sent Me

draw him. No man can come unto Me, except it were given unto him of My Father' (vi. 44, 65). So the apostles in their letters to the Christian Churches attribute their high calling wholly to God. They are 'elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father' (1 Pet. i. 2); 'a chosen generation' (ii. 9); 'sanctified' (i.e. consecrated) 'by God the Father, and preserved in Christ Jesus, and called' (Jude 1); 'beloved of God, called to be saints' (Rom. i. 7). St. Paul, the great apostle of the Gentiles, gives himself as a striking instance of this principle. He writes to the Galatians (i. 12—16), 'I neither received the Gospel of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ. For ye have heard, in time past, how that beyond measure I persecuted the Church of God, and wasted it. But it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me.'

It is very striking that the Greek word for 'freely' in St. Paul's statement of justification (Rom. iii. 24), 'Being justified freely' (δωρεάν), or '*without a cause*, by His grace,' is the very same which the Lord Jesus uses of the gratuitousness of man's hatred: 'They hated Me *without a cause*' (δωρεάν) (John xv. 25). God the Father gave every cause to men to love Him; yet men

hated Him. Jesus loaded men with countless favours, feeding the hungry, healing the sick, comforting the mourners, cleansing the lepers, and raising the dead; yet men hated Him. Men, by their perverse ingratitude and rebellion, gave God every cause to hate them; yet God loved them; yea, so loved them, that, 'while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us:' and so, 'when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son.' As gratuitous as was our hatred, so gratuitous was His love. (Rom. v. 6, 10.) Truly we may cry, 'Great is the mystery of godliness'!

Thus we have passed in brief review God's call, consecutively, of the Patriarchal, the Israelite, and the Christian Church from out of the surrounding world. In all we have seen the beginnings of the Church are of the grace of God, not of the merit of man. How great love we owe to Him who first loved us! We can appreciate that love aright only by the Holy Ghost shedding abroad the love of God in our hearts. If we believe and know the love that God hath to us, we have in this a pledge, that 'He who hath begun a good work in us, will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ' (Phil. i. 6). May we each 'be able to comprehend, with all saints, what is the breadth, and

length, and depth, and height, and to know the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, that we may be filled with all the fulness of God'! (Eph. iii. 18, 19.) Amen.

II.

THE CHURCH'S PRIVILEGES AND RESPONSIBILITIES AS WITNESS FOR GOD IN THE WORLD.

'*Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people, that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvellous light*' (1 Pet. ii. 9).

IN the first discourse we considered God's calling of the Church. Our next subject is *the Church's calling upon Jehovah as her God.* In the subject before us is involved the consideration of (1) our privileges on the one hand, and (2) our responsibilities on the other.

I. We saw that it was at the time of Enos' birth, that 'men began to call upon the name of Jehovah.' It is not meant that there had been no worship of God before. Nay, already 'by faith Abel' had 'offered a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts' (Heb. xi. 4). What is meant is that at the time of the birth of Seth's son, the godly, at the call of

God, began, by united invocation of God in His covenanted character of 'Jehovah' their God, to lay the foundation of the Church and Kingdom of God on earth.

It is full of significancy that it is 'the name of JEHOVAH' which the Sethites are said to have 'called upon.' As the name of God ELOHIM* expresses His eternal power and Godhead manifested in nature, so JEHOVAH† indicates the Personal God, the unchanging 'I am,' in covenant with His Church and people. His 'name' means His manifested character, unchangeably faithful to His promises, and all-powerful to fulfil them. Enoch and Noah, both of whom 'walked with God,' experienced Him to be such. God took Enoch to Himself, translating him that he should not see death, and so delivering him out of an opposing world.

Jehovah with His own hand 'shut' Noah safely in the ark, when bringing the destroying flood upon the ungodly.

And here I may incidentally remark that the Assyrian and Babylonian traditions confirm the Scripture history of the flood in all fundamental

* From *Alah*, 'strong,' or, *to swear by*. אלה means *strength*.

† From *Havah*, 'to be;' a verb obsolete in Moses' time; so that Jehovah must be a name of the highest antiquity. It appears in the compounds, Moriah, Gen. xxii. 2, 14, and Jochebed.

points. The Scripture account, by its majestic simplicity, transparent truthfulness, and pure monotheism, proves that it is the Divine original, and that the Assyrian account, as deciphered by G. Smith, is the copy, with the addition of man's fabulous inventions, and mythological legends of gods and heroes.

Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, though not having received the fulfilment of the promises, yet 'saw them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth' (Heb. xi. 13). But the time came at last when the earthly part of the promise to Abraham's seed was to be fulfilled, and they were no longer to be dwellers in tents, as their forefathers had been in Canaan, but were to possess that land as their home. Then God said to Moses (Ex. vi. 2, 3), 'I am Jehovah, and I appeared unto Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, by the name of God Almighty (El Shaddai), but by my name JEHOVAH was I not known.'

Not that the designation 'Jehovah' was not known before; for it is found as early as the second chapter of Genesis, when He appears as not merely the God of creation and providence as in the first chapter, but as the LORD in personal covenant with man. What is meant in Ex. vi. 2, 3 is: To Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob,

when I gave the promises, I was only known as God Almighty (Gen. xvii. 1). But now that I am about to fulfil them, I reveal Myself in the full import of the name 'JEHOVAH,' ever the same I AM, unchangeably faithful to Myself and My word of promise. Now first My name Jehovah assumes a new significancy in relation to My covenant people; they now first experimentally know its preciousness in My keeping My unchangeable word.

(1.) *The Church's grand privilege*, then, from the first has been, she is heir of Jehovah's promises, both temporal and spiritual. So transcending all earthly goods did Abraham esteem these, that 'by faith he sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob the heirs with him of the same promise' (Heb. xi. 9). The promises of God are to the believer infinitely preferable to the performances of the world. The Church, venturing implicitly on God's word, chooses the eternal blessedness of the future, rather than the world's good things of the transitory present. Even now she realizes God's word to Abraham, 'I am thy exceeding great reward' (Gen. xv. 1). Not so much God's gifts, as God Himself is her portion.

(2.) So *the Church's second grand privilege* is, God Himself is her portion and supreme good. This is implied in the record of her first call,

'Then began men to call IN* the name of Jehovah.' The name of Jehovah was thereby put upon them as His people, brought by His grace into covenant with Him. Jehovah united Himself, with all His loving attributes, in personal union with them, and unites them with Him. As in Isa. xliv. 3, 5, Jehovah promises, 'I will pour My Spirit upon thy seed. One shall say, I am the Lord's, and another shall subscribe with his hand unto Jehovah, and surname himself by the name of Israel;' so again, in Amos ix. 12, Jehovah claims the heathen as ultimately about to be His by designating them 'all the heathen upon whom My name is called.'

This *bearing of God's name* was Israel's special privilege. The Third Commandment included this: 'Thou shalt not *bear* the name of Jehovah thy God in vain, for Jehovah will not hold him guiltless that beareth His name in vain.' Israel was designated as His, by His putting His name on them: as He saith, 'Ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people, and a kingdom of priests and a holy nation' (Ex. xix. 5, 6): 'For Jehovah's portion is His people' (Deut. xxxii. 9): and as they called on His name as theirs, so He calls them His: 'I have called thee by thy name, thou art Mine' (Isa. xliii. 1).

* So the Hebrew בְּשֵׁם, Gen. iv. 26.

Similarly, believers are baptized '*into** the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost' in our Christian Church. The expression implies living union with God as our Father in Christ through the Holy Ghost. We have 'exceeding great and precious promises given unto us, that by them we may be partakers of the Divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust' (2 Pet. i. 4).

The name 'Christians' was first given to believers at Antioch when converts were brought into the Church from among Gentile idolaters. The Jews cannot have originated the name, for they would never give a name which admitted what they denied, namely, that Jesus is *the Christ: their* contemptuous designation for believers was 'Nazarenes.' Believers did not originate the name, for they knew one another as 'brethren.' The people of Antioch, notorious for giving nicknames, seem therefore to have invented the name 'Christians.' But whoever were the *secondary* originators of it, God was the primary author of it. The Greek word for 'called' (Acts xi. 26) is always elsewhere in the New Testament used of Divine direction: so that we must translate 'The disciples were Divinely called† Christians first at

* So the Greek, Matt. xxviii. 19, εἰς τὸ ὄνομα.

† Χρηματίσαι.

Antioch.' The Divine calling of the Church to be Christian involves union with Christ and the Father, through the unction of the Holy Spirit. Not to walk in love, as Christ walked, is, according to James ii. 7, to 'blaspheme that worthy name by the which we are called.' The word 'Church' itself also, by derivation,* implies our *belonging to the Lord* as His property.

(3.) So then *the Church's third grand privilege* is, 'As Christ is, so are we in this world' (1 John iv. 17). He is the great 'High priest of our profession' (Heb. iii. 1); and the 'King of kings' (Rev. xix. 16): so the anthem of the Church is 'Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood, and hath made us *kings* and *priests* unto God and His Father, be glory and dominion for ever and ever!' (Rev. i. 5, 6).

Israel's high calling was to be 'a kingdom of priests.' But the promise rested on the condition, 'If ye obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant.' Israel heretofore has failed in the engagement, 'All that the Lord said, we will do, and be obedient' (Ex. xix. 6; xxiv. 7). Even as early as at Sinai, they apostatized to

* From the Greek Κυριακὴ δικία, 'the house of the Lord:' the word came to us from the Greeks of Constantinople, through the Goths, the first of the Northern hordes converted to Christianity.

calf worship, and so forfeited for the time their promised priesthood. Indeed, they themselves through fear renounced their privilege of priestly access to God, at the very time of the covenant: 'Speak thou with us,' said they to Moses, 'but let not God speak with us, lest we die' (Ex. xx. 18, 19). And God accepted their renunciation: 'They have well spoken that which they have spoken' (Deut. xviii. 17; v. 24—28). Then the priesthood which belonged to the nation as a whole was delegated to the chosen family of one tribe, the family of Aaron of Levi (Num. viii. 10).

(*a.*) But in our highly-favoured dispensation, God restores the privileges of the priesthood to the *whole* Christian Church. In Israel's case the Divine command expressly selected one tribe to minister for the nation in sacred things, and one family to exercise the priesthood. But no such Divine delegation of the whole Church's priesthood to a separated class of ministers exclusively,* whether with or without apostolical succession,

* The commission, 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost; whose soever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whose soever sins ye retain, they are retained,' was addressed to 'the disciples,' and not to the Twelve alone. Indeed, the absence of Thomas suffices to prove that the commission is to the Church in general. John xx. 20—23: his use of 'disciples,' as not limited to the Twelve, is proved by vi. 66, 67. St. Luke xxiv. 33—49 proves that our Lord spake His commission not only to 'the eleven,' but also to 'them that were with them.'

is to be found in the New Testament. Nay, on the contrary, though the Greek term for the priests of the Old Testament (ἱερεῖς), 'sacrificing priests,' was the natural one for the writers of the New Testament, as being Jews, to have used of Christian ministers, yet it is the very one which they never apply to them. It must have been by Divine power they were withheld from using the sacerdotal term: they call them deacons, presbyters, or elders, bishops and ministers, but never sacerdotal priests. The seeming exceptions (Rev. i. 6, and 1 Pet. ii. 5, 9) confirm the rule, for the terms 'priests' and 'priesthood' are applied not to Christian ministers alone, but to the whole Church, ministers and people alike.

Our privilege as *priests* is, 'Through Jesus Christ we all have access by one Spirit unto the Father' (Eph. ii. 18). 'We have boldness to enter the holiest by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated, through the vail, that is, His flesh' (Heb. x. 19—21). We all alike are privileged 'to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ' (1 Pet. i. 5). These sacrifices are prayer, praise, and good works (Heb. xiii. 15, 16).

(*b.*) Our privilege also is to be *kings*, and as such, to reign in spirit with Christ unseen, 'sitting together now with Him in heavenly

places' (Eph. ii. 6). As Christ the Church's Lord is the antitypical *Solomon*, 'the Prince of peace,' so she is the *Shulamith*, the Princess of peace (Song of Sol. vi. 13). But as yet 'the kingdom of God cometh not with observation' (Luke xvii. 20). The *manifestation* of our kingship is to be only when Christ our Head shall be manifested as King (Col. iii. 4). Then shall all those transfigured saints who have part in the first resurrection reign with Him first for a thousand years over the earth (Rev. v. 10; xx. 6), and finally, in the new heavens and earth, 'they shall reign for ever and ever' (xxii. 5).

Herein is the error of the Church of Rome. Her Bishop and cardinal princes would reign now, when Christ, our Head, as yet is not manifested as King. St. Paul and the apostles, if they were now alive, would address them, 'Now ye are full, now ye are rich, ye have reigned as kings without us' (1 Cor. iv. 8). But there can be no kingship for the Church on the earth, in the absence visibly of her Head, the King of kings. Moreover the claim of the visible Church to what belongs exclusively to the as yet invisible and true Catholic Church, has proved a prolific source of errors. The Scripture privileges assigned to the Church, namely, election, adoption (Eph. i. 4, 5), spiritual

priesthood, sure guidance by the Spirit (John xvi. 13) into all truth, perfect holiness, and eternal glory, belong to those alone of the visible Church who are in living union with Christ. See Eph. v. 23—27. Heb. xii. 22, 23.

The parable of the tares and wheat, on the other hand, teaches us that we must not prematurely attempt to sever the tares from the wheat. We must wait till Christ's manifestation for the manifestation of the sons of God (Rom. viii. 19). Then, and not till then, shall the Church be 'all fair' (Song of Sol. iv. 7), 'all glorious within' (Ps. xlv. 13), and the light of God shall be dwelling in her, and shining out through her, 'like a jasper stone clear as crystal' (Rev. xxi. 11).

Meantime there exists in the visible Church, the true Church, known to God, but not to man, who is unable to discern hearts; this true Church is Christ's 'flock,' never to be plucked out of His hand (John x. 28); His mystical 'body' (1 Cor. xii. 12); 'the temple of the Holy Ghost' founded on the 'Rock of Ages" (1 Cor. iii. 11, 16, 17); not restricted to any one ecclesiastical organization (for no one form of government and ministry is exclusively laid down as of Divine and permanent obligation in the New Testament), but comprising in one

unity of the Spirit, 'all that in every place call upon the name of Jesus Christ our Lord,' even 'all them that love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity' (1 Cor. i. 2. Eph. vi. 24). Our Lord recognizes the diversity of the *folds*, whilst there is but one 'flock;' 'other sheep I have, which are not of this *fold* (αὐλῆς), them also I must bring, and they shall be one *flock* (ποιμνή) and one shepherd.'

The Lord Jesus now dwells by His Spirit in this one wide-spread flock. The Holy Ghost imparted from on high a measure of His gracious influences to the Old Testament Church. But now He hath come down in person to dwell in the Church, and to prepare her for dwelling with the Father and the Son in the everlasting home. Not merely the precursory droppings, but the gracious shower itself has descended on earth. God formerly spake by His word; but now the Word Himself dwells in us, and among us by the Holy Ghost who is given to us.

II. Such are the Church's high privileges. Her *responsibilities* correspond to her privileges. Her calling is 'that she should show forth the praises of Him who hath called her out of darkness into His marvellous light.' God's grand end in choosing the Church was His own glory; 'to the praise of the glory of His grace, wherein

He hath made us *objects of His grace* * in the Beloved.' Her own perfecting in holiness is in order to reflect His perfections. 'Thy renown went forth,' saith God to Israel, 'through MY comeliness *which I had put upon thee*' (Ez. xvi. 14).

'Ye are my witnesses' (Isa. xliv. 8). The Church's *witness* to the truth of God is to be (1) with her voice, (2) with her life, and (3) with her sufferings.

(1.) Her voice is to be heard continually in *prayer* and *praise*. The tendencies of our age are to regard God as nature, rather than as the Person who first originated, and now upholds, and rules nature. Many scientific and unscientific men consider God as law, and deny Him freedom in nature, in providence, and in history. The truth is, we ought to combine science with faith, law with love, God's order with God's freedom. We need not give up the study of the beautiful harmony of the universe; but let us see in God perfect law, united with perfect freedom.

His providence, as our loving, personal Father in Christ, extends not merely to the general good of the whole, but to that of each individual believer. 'The very hairs of your head are all numbered' (Matt. x. 30). As man is free to

* Ἐχαρίτωσεν, Eph. i. 6.

act within nature, yet from above nature,—in a sphere of law and at the same time freedom,—much more can man's Creator act in freedom, and at the same time in law. So then the Scriptural idea of prayer is not contrary to true philosophy. But statistical experiments such as were proposed to test whether God is the Hearer of prayer, are most unphilosophical. For the first requisite, and the very essence, of prayer is faith. 'What things soever ye desire when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them' (Mark xi. 24). But to ask, in order to see, whether God is or is not, is to insult God to His face, in defiance of His word. 'Thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God' (Deut. vi. 16. Matt. iv. 7). And again, 'Let a man ask in faith, nothing wavering; for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed' (James i. 6, 7).

The Church's calling now, therefore, in the face of a prayerless world, is to pray without ceasing. As 'the accuser of the brethren accuses them before our God day and night' (Rev. xii. 10), so day and night God's own elect cry unto Him (Luke xviii. 7). Praise also accompanies prayer. Yea, it is a powerful plea for obtaining our requests. It was when the singers at the head of Jehoshaphat's army began

to sing and to praise, that 'Jehovah set ambushments against the Ammonite invaders, and they were smitten' (2 Chron. xx. 22). It was 'when the trumpeters and singers were as one to make one sound to be heard in praising and thanking Jehovah. For He is good, for His mercy endureth for ever, that then the house was filled with a cloud, even the house of Jehovah' (v. 13). It was when the disciples, having been let go by the magistrates, 'lifted up their voice with one accord' in praise, combined with prayer (Acts iv. 24—31), that 'the place was shaken where they were assembled together, and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost.' It was when Paul and Silas in their dark Philippian prison not only prayed, but sang praises to God, that suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that every one's bands were loosed: and the issue was the conversion of the hard-hearted gaoler to Christ (Acts xvi. 25, 26).

(2.) The Church also witnesses for her Lord in her *life.* Israel was chosen by Jehovah to be "a special, peculiar, and holy people unto Himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth' (Deut. vii. 6.; xiv. 2, 21). Israel was to 'dwell alone, and not to be reckoned among the nations' (Num. xxiii. 9). So the Church's calling is to be 'in the world,' yet 'not of the world,'

even as her Head 'is not of the world' (John xvii. 11, 14, 16). It is not our being in the world that will hurt our Christianity, but it is our letting the world be in us: just as it is not the ship's being in the water that sinks it, but its admitting the water into it. As the Lord Jesus saith, 'I pray not that Thou shouldest take them out of the world, but that Thou shouldest keep them from the evil.' The Church is to be lifted above, whilst in, the world: and 'this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith' (1 John v. 4). So long as we believe, we must conquer; for 'greater is He that is in us, than he that is in the world' (iv. 4). The prince of this world ruleth in the children of disobedience. But the Spirit of Jesus in us is mightier than he. In order that we may conquer, yea, be more than conquerors, we must not only live in the Spirit, but also walk in the Spirit (Gal. v. 25). We are 'Christ's epistle known and read of all men' (2 Cor. iii. 2, 3): the only Bible which the men of the world will read. We are a city set on a hill, which cannot be hid: but our light must be held aloft, that it may dispel the surrounding darkness. We are the salt of the earth, to season the corruption which prevails on all sides (Matt. v. 13, 14). Our high calling is 'not to be conformed to

this world, but to be transformed by the renewing of our minds' (Rom. xii. 2). Not affected singularity, or separation from outward society, is what is required of us. The salt of the Church is not to be heaped in one spot, but to permeate, and, if possible, purify the mass. Inward separation of heart from the world's selfishness, covetousness, and alienation from God, is the Church's high calling.

Furthermore the Church witnesses for her Lord by direct *confession before men.* 'Go ye, make disciples * of all nations,' was our Lord's last charge to the Church before His ascension. He also foretells that, acting on His charge, His followers would extend His Spiritual Kingdom from Jerusalem, as the starting-point, in all directions: 'Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth' (Acts i. 8). The Book of the Acts is a development of this programme, appointed by the Master. To witness for the Lord Jesus before the world which knows Him not, is still the Church's calling, and will be until He shall come in manifested glory. As our Lord when Pilate asked, 'Art thou a *King*

* Μαθητεύσατε, Matt. xxviii. 19.

then?' replied, 'To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth:' so we also, by bearing witness unto the truth, become '*Kings* unto God and the Father' (Rev. i. 6).

(3.) Lastly, the Church witnesses to and for her Lord by *suffering for His sake.* She remembers that 'If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him: if we deny Him, He also will deny us' (2 Tim. ii. 12). The Collect for St. John the Baptist's day puts into our mouth the prayer 'that we may after his example constantly speak the truth, boldly rebuke vice, and patiently suffer for the truth's sake.' Here we have an admirable summary of the Church's testimony for the truth. If our witness for our Lord be faithful, whilst on the one hand we shall be the honoured instruments in the Holy Spirit's hands of winning some to their salvation, and to our own rejoicing, in the great day of the Lord, we cannot avoid on the other hand provoking the opposition of many. Satan will not allow his victims to escape without a struggle. The saints 'overcome him *on account* of *the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony, and they love not their lives unto the death.' The loving patience of the saints is the anvil which has worn out all the hammers of

* *Διά with the* accusative: *on the ground of*, Rev. xii. 11.

the persecutors. The worldly-minded cannot but feel 'tormented' by the testimony of the faithful, and try to rid themselves of it (Rev. xi. 10).

Thus then we have reviewed the Church's privileges, as heir of the promises temporal and spiritual, having God as her portion, bearing Jehovah Jesus' name, called to be kings and priests unto God, the temple of the indwelling Holy Ghost. We have also considered her corresponding responsibilities; chosen to be the Lord's witnesses, with her voice uplifted in prayer and praise, separated from the world, consecrated to her Head and King, confessing His name before men, striving to win men to salvation, and, when required, ready to suffer for the truth's sake. Oh, brethren, what a holy and blessed calling! Who is sufficient for these things? None of us is so of himself. But Christ Jesus promises to 'strengthen us with all might, according to His glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness' (Col. i. 11): and the Divine Person by Whom He works, is (Eph. iii. 16) 'by His Spirit in the inner man.' Let us put Him to the proof by asking in faith. Let us go forth in His might to fulfil our high and holy calling; so our experience shall be that of the Apostle, 'I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me' (Phil. iv. 13).

III.

APOSTASY OF THE OLD TESTAMENT CHURCH FROM HER LORD TO THE WORLD, AND HER RETRIBUTIVE PUNISHMENT BY THE WORLD.

'*Therefore, O Aholibah, thus saith* THE LORD GOD: BEHOLD, *I will raise up thy lovers against thee*' (Ez. xxiii. 22).

WE have considered in succession God's calling of the Church, and the Church's calling upon God; that is to say, the Church's high privileges, and the Church's consequent responsibilities. Our subject now is the unfaithfulness of the Old Testament Church, and its righteous retribution. The very idea of the Church implies a people called out of the ungodly world, to witness to all around concerning the grace, love, and holiness of Him who hath called us. But what if the Church, which was appointed to protest by word, deed, and example, against the disloyalty of the world to our Heavenly King, should herself become assimilated to the world; and *though not* joining in the world's cry, 'We will

not have this Man to reign over us,' yet should tacitly connive at it, and suppress her bold testimony for the Lord. Why then it must be admitted, the Church has ceased to fulfil the sole purpose for which she exists, and the long-suffering God must at last sweep her away as an unprofitable cumberer of the earth. The 'salt has then lost its savour; and is thenceforth good for nothing but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men' (Matt. v. 13).

Nay more, of all corruptions none is so bad as the corruption of what would have been the best of things,* if it had fulfilled its grand purpose: therefore its punishment is the severest. Salt is good: but wherewith will ye season the salt that has lost its saltness? (Mark ix. 50). Wherewith can you spiritualize the Church, which has lost its spirituality, quenched the Holy Spirit, and become as carnal as the world which it was designed to reprove and convert? What else must be the issue, but that 'judgment must begin at the house of God'?

Let us trace this principle as exemplified in the history of the Patriarchal and the Israelite Churches.

I. The earliest Patriarchal Church was that of the Sethites. God made His epiphany to the

* Corruptio optimi pessima.

children of Seth, and they became His elect Church to show forth His glory. But man's apostasy in course of time followed after God's epiphany. Judgment did not descend from God, so long as the corruption was restricted to the race of Cain, that is, to the openly godless, who made no profession of religion. But we read (Gen. vi.): 'The sons of God,' that is, the Sethites,* adopted by God's grace into His family, the Church, 'saw the daughters of men,' that is, the worldly Cainites, 'and they took them wives of all which they chose.' Fancy and passion, instead of the fear and love of God, were their ruling motives. 'Unequal yoking' of believers with unbelievers in marriage, broke down the wall of separation between the Church and the world. Thus compromise of principle on the part of the children of God, opened the flood-gates to the rushing in of a tide of universal corruption.

* Certainly not *angels*. For 'wives' and 'taking wives,' i.e. '*marriage*' cannot be predicated of fornication; and 'going after strange flesh' (Jude 6, 7; Gen. vi. 2). Christ moreover declares, 'angels neither marry, nor are given in marriage' (Matt. xxii. 30). The analogy to Sodom is this, the angels' ambition, alienating their affections from God, is a spiritual fornication, analogous to the Sodomites 'going after strange flesh.' The Sethites were 'sons of God,' as the Israelites (Deut. xxxii. 5. Hos. i. 10. Ex. iv. 22).

It is very striking that our Lord, in describing the state of men before the flood, does not notice the lawless violence of the age,* but fixes on its intense worldliness as the sin which ripened it for judgment: 'They were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, and knew not until the flood came and took them all away.' (Matt. xxiv. 38). God bore with the godless world for the sake of His elect Church in the midst of it. But when even the Church became apostate by union with the world, and 'the earth was corrupt before God, and filled with violence through them' (Gen. vi. 11, 13), God's long-suffering gave place to righteous zeal against sin: ver. 3, 'My Spirit shall not always strive with (or† *rule in*) man:' that is, shall no longer contend with his fleshliness: I will give him up to his own carnality and its penalty: ‡'for that he also

* 'There were *giants* in the earth in those days;' literally 'fellers,' *tyrants* who 'fell' upon others: נְפִלִים, from נָפַל, 'to fall upon' (Num. xiii. 33). Distinct from these are the 'mighty men of old, men of renown,' sprung from the daughters of men by the sons of God.

† יָדוֹן.

‡ בְּשַׁגַּם הוּא. Keil and Delitzsch explains '*in his erring*' he is fleshly, and so not ruled by the Spirit of God (John iii. 6). But their objection to the English Version that *also* is an unmeaning emphasis is untenable: see the explanation above. The Aramæism ש for אשר is to be expected in the oldest Scriptures, where Hebrew and Aramaic were closely joined as kindred dialects.

(even the Sethite professor of godliness) is flesh, i. e. fleshly." So then the flood swept away the professors of religion and the non-professors alike, excepting the family of the one witness for God, Noah, alone found faithful among the faithless.

Here then we perceive an eternal principle of God's dealings with the visible Church. If once she compromises her high calling for the sake of union with the ungodly world, as she shares in the world's sin, so must she share in the world's punishment. God gives her over to fleshliness, and its awful consequences: as it is written, 'Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken Jehovah thy God' (Jer. ii. 19).

This principle is illustrated on a smaller scale in the case of Lot: as that which is true of the Church holds true in the case of each individual member. Lot, when given his choice of residence by his magnanimous uncle Abraham, judged after the flesh and the sight of the eyes: beholding all the well-watered plain (or *circle* כִּכַּר) of Jordan, he chose it, and pitched his tent toward Sodom; love of gain outweighed all consideration of the fact that 'the men of Sodom

were wicked, and sinners before Jehovah exceedingly.' (Gen. xiii). What then was the consequence? From dwelling 'toward' Sodom, he advanced a further downward step, as it is the nature of all compromises of principle, that one false move entails another and a worse one: Lot took up his abode *in* Sodom. And now the principle of God's dealings begins to manifest itself. Chedorlaomer and his allies defeated the Kings of Sodom and Gomorrah, and took all their goods, including Lot's. So the very wealth for which Lot had chosen Sodom as his abode, notwithstanding its wickedness, is in the hands of the enemy, and he himself is led away captive. How truly Lot's 'own backslidings reproved' him! and were it not for the interposition of his godly uncle, whom he treated so selfishly, he would have lost both his property and his liberty. But amidst his inconsistencies, Lot was still a child of God. According to 2 Pet. ii. 7, 8, 'Just Lot vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked—that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds.' He ought never to have been there, and his vexation was the retributive penalty of his worldly choice. Nevertheless, when there, he was kept by the grace of God

from being overcome by temptation, and he was used, in God's marvellous providence, to be a witness for God against the surrounding ungodliness. So then he was delivered, when Sodom was overthrown by fire. He was only 'chastened of the Lord, that he should not be condemned with the world' (1 Cor. xi. 32).

II. Let us pass on to the history of the Israelite Church at the time of the Judges. The key to the whole lies in this principle, that so long as the Church is faithful to her Lord, *He* is faithful to His promise of keeping her; but when the Church forsakes Jehovah for the world, the world, the instrument of her sin, is in righteous retribution made the instrument of her punishment. So the Angel of Jehovah declared to Israel at Bochim (Judg. ii. 1—3, 14—23), 'I have brought you unto the land which I sware unto your fathers, and I said, I will never break my covenant with you; And ye shall make no league with the inhabitants of this land, ye shall throw down their altars, but ye have not obeyed my voice:—Wherefore I also will not drive them out from before you, but they shall be as thorns in your sides.' The book of Judges is one continuous narrative of the Lord's epiphanies to Israel, which, after a brief period of Israel's faithfulness, are succeeded by Israel's apostasies; then follow

the punishments: and the remarkable feature in those punishments is, they were inflicted by the instrumentality of those very nations, for the sake of whose idolatrous and carnal ways, Israel had forsaken Jehovah. The Israelites 'served Baalim and Asheeroth,'* the Phœnician male and female idols, representing the sun and the heavenly hosts, and the active and passive powers of nature. The evil began by compromise. The Israelites instead of shunning, 'dwelt among the Canaanites, Hittites, Amorites, Perizzites, Hivites, and Jebusites.' Next, the same course which brought on the corruption of the Church before the flood, was followed by Israel: 'They took the daughters of the neighbouring heathen to be their wives, and gave their daughters to their sons:" so they were led on to the last and worst step, 'they served their gods:' 'Therefore the anger of Jehovah was hot against Israel' (Judg. iii. 5—8). So He sold them into the hand of those heathen whose favour they had sought, at the cost of forfeiting

* English Version, 'the groves.' But in 2 Kings xxiii. 5 it would be nonsense, 'Josiah brought out the grove (*Asherah*) from the house of the Lord.' Astarte is the personal goddess; Asherah, her conventional symbol. The stone pillar (Hebr. Ex. xxxiv. 13) was Baal's symbol; the wooden pillar or tree was Astarte's, 2 Kings xviii. 4. The sacred tree in Assyrian sculptures corresponds.

the favour of the Lord. The servitudes increased successively in length: that to Cushan Reshathaim for eight years; to Eglon for eighteen; to Jabin for twenty. The humiliation also became more and more aggravated. The first servitude was to a *distant* king, destined to scourge Israel in after-years, the King of Mesopotamia. The second servitude was to a *neighbouring* king, Eglon of Moab. The third was to Jabin, king *in Canaan itself.*

The true secret of Israel's degradation appears in Judges v. 8. 'They chose new gods:' so the sure consequence followed, 'there was war in the gates: was there a shield or spear seen among forty thousand in Israel?' Thrice Jehovah threatened judgment for apostasy, first at Bochim (ii. 1—4); next at the Midianite invasion (vi. 7—10); lastly, after Israel had served the gods of Ammon and the Philistines, Jehovah sold them into the hands of the Philistines and of Ammon, the instruments of their sin becoming the instruments of their punishment: and when they in their distress cried to Jehovah, His just reply was, 'Go and cry unto the gods which ye have chosen, let them deliver you in the time of your tribulation' (x. 6—14). Intermarriages with heathen neighbours, undue association with Gentiles, the beauty of the Canaanite women,

the pomp, gaiety and voluptuousness of their rites, the hope of learning the future by idolatrous divination, and superstitious fears of the traditional gods of the localities where they settled, all inclined Israel to add to Jehovah's worship the idolatries prevailing around them: to *add* these, I say,—for they had too strong proofs of the Divine claims of the law of Jehovah, to renounce it wholly. The striking proof of the Divine authority of the Law was, it was only in prosperity that Israel slighted it; in distress they always cried to God, and returned to the Lord, and invariably received deliverance. Severe chastisement from those very nations whose sin they copied, was just the discipline which they needed, and which God applied. Jehovah fulfilled His threats in Israel's ever-deepening oppression by the foe, the last oppression recorded in Judges, namely, that by the Philistines, lasting for no less than forty years.

As Jehovah was the point of union of Israel's Church and nation, so apostasy to other gods many, and lords many, produced growing disunion among the nation's tribes. Under Othniel and Ehud all Israel rose against the foe. Under Barak, the tribes Reuben, Dan, and Asher took no part (ch. v. 15—17). Gideon of Manasseh scarcely appeased Ephraim's jealousy (viii. 1). Abime-

lech's usurpation of the kingship illustrates the national decline (ix.). Ephraim fought with Jephthah and the eastern tribes, to its own sore loss, (xii.). The men of Judah were so degenerate as to seek to give up their deliverer Samson to their Philistine oppressors. (xv. 9—14). And so utterly crushed was the nation that, just as Porsena, the Etrurian King, forbad the vanquished Romans to use iron, save in agriculture,* so 'there was no smith found throughout all Israel, for the Philistines said, Lest the Hebrews make them swords or spears' (1 Sam. xiii. 19—22).

III. The history of the Kings of Israel and Judah is the crowning illustration in Old Testament times, of the divine principle that *when the Church forsakes her God for the world, God in righteous retribution gives her up to the world to be the executioner of His judgments.* Solomon, Israel's representative king, began well. Filled with wisdom by God's extraordinary gift, he dedicated the temple with a prayer, breathing entire devotion to God: 'That Thine eyes may be open toward this house night and day.' God's answer at Gibeon was the echo of his prayer (1 Kings viii. 29; ix. 3), 'Mine eyes and my heart shall be

* Pliny xxxiv. 14. In fœdere quod, expulsis regibus, populo Romano dedit Porsena, nominatim comprehensum invenimus, ne ferro nisi in agriculturâ uterentur.

there perpetually:' but God added the warning that, if Israel should apostatize, the temple should become 'a byword among all people.'

The first step in Solomon's declensions was, the wealth which flowed in from all quarters tended to draw his heart away from God to luxuriant self-indulgence. It is suggestive, that the number of talents of gold that came in to him in one year was 666, the very number of the beast in Rev. xiii. 18: and it is the only passage in the Old Testament where the number occurs without variation (1 Kings x. 14. 2 Chron. ix. 13). Then, in neglect of God's command that he should not multiply horses to himself (Deut. xvii. 16), Solomon imported horses and chariots in large numbers from Egypt, leaning on material resources, instead of on the living God. Then, the chief cause of his backsliding was, he took many wives, besides the daughter of Pharaoh: 'And his wives turned away his heart' (1 Kings xi. 1—8). Beginning with latitudinarian toleration of the superstitions of his heathen wives, he ended with adopting them himself, retaining at the same time what cannot be combined with idols, the worship of Jehovah. So the scourge of his apostasy came, in righteous retribution, from the heathen world; even as conformity with the world had been his sin:

Jeroboam in alliance with Egypt, Rezon of Zobah, and Hadad of Edom became his adversaries. The judgment fell in the reign of his son Rehoboam, who lost ten out of the twelve tribes constituting the kingdom.

It is remarkable that in the division of the old Testament into the Law, the Prophets, and the Cherubim or Hagiographa, the Books of Samuel and Kings are enumerated with the Prophets. The reason is, because the eternal principles of righteousness upon which God governed Israel in relation to the world, in the nation's *history*, narrated in the Books of Samuel and Kings, are those same principles whereon the *prophecies* rest. God having given up apostates to 'eat of the fruit of their own way' (Prov. i. 31), in the past, is a sure earnest that He will do so again in the future; and this is the ground of Scripture prophecy, as contrasted with heathen soothsaying. Again, Scripture history is not a mere chronicle of *facts*. It is God's illustration of *His own righteousness* in His dealings with the Church and the world.

Israel was called to be the wife of Jehovah spiritually. 'Thy Maker is thine Husband, Jehovah of Hosts is His Name' (Isa. liv. 5), is the Lord's own declaration to Israel. But in order that she may realize all the love of her

Lord, He reminds her (Ps. xlv. 10), 'Hearken, O daughter (for the Church is Jehovah's daughter, as well as bride), and consider, and incline thine ear, forget also thine own people and thy father's house: so shall the King greatly desire thy beauty, for He is thy Lord, and worship thou Him.' If Israel had hearkened and renounced this world for her Lord, then 'her peace had been as a river, and her righteousness as the waves of the sea' (Isa. xlviii. 18). But she tried to compromise between Jehovah and the world, which is sure to end in forsaking Jehovah for the world. 'Go ye,' saith Jehovah Elohim, 'serve ye every one his idols—if ye will not hearken unto Me: but pollute ye My Holy Name no more with your gifts, and with your idols' (Ez. xx. 39). If the visible Church *must* have her worldly idols, then she cannot have also her Lord.

The golden calves of Jeroboam were designed as a compromise; for they represented Jehovah's Cherubim, not other gods. Now God works out His judgments in the way of natural consequence. So Israel's sin wrought out its own necessary punishment. The disgust of all godly Israelites drove the best to the Southern Kingdom. Intestine divisions, and a perpetual conflict between the Mosaic law still recognized, and the established state idolatry, and lastly, the opening

thereby given to hostile kingdoms, and Israel's final captivity to the heathen world-power whose favour Israel had sought at the cost of God's favour, were the natural and righteous penalty. Yet Judah, undeterred by her elder sister's awful example, and by the warnings of God's prophets, at nearly the same interval between the sin and its punishment, followed Israel into captivity.

Ezekiel (xxiii.) represents Israel, the Northern Kingdom, and Judah, the Southern, under the names of Aholah (meaning *her own tabernacle*) and Aholibah (meaning *my tabernacle is in her*). Now in God's view, the Church's apostasy constitutes harlotry or adultery; for it is unfaithfulness to her marriage vow to Jehovah. So He saith (1) 'Aholah played the harlot, when she was Mine; and she doted on her lovers, the Assyrians her neighbours, clothed with blue—all desirable young men—with all their idols she defiled herself.' The rich colours of the Assyrian attire, which stirred up in her the lust of the eye, are still to be seen in the coloured basreliefs of Nineveh's disentombed palaces. Observe, then, how her punishment was divinely connected with her sin. The very Assyrians for whom she forsook Jehovah, were made His executioners of wrath upon her. So selfish is the pretended friendship of the world. 'Wherefore

(saith Jehovah) I have delivered her into the hand of her lovers,—the Assyrians upon whom she doted—they executed judgment upon her.' The removal of the Ten Tribes from their own land, to which they have never yet returned, is a signal illustration of God's unchanging law, that 'the backslider in heart shall be filled with his own ways' (Prov. xiv. 14).

(2) Notwithstanding Israel's punishment, Judah followed Israel's sin. Her case was the more aggravated, in that she had the privilege of having Jehovah's own tabernacle in her, as Aholibah means; whereas Israel's tabernacle was one of her own devising, as Aholah means. Even the godly king, Jehoshaphat, formed alliance with the ungodly Ahab; and that alliance, as it was his one great sin, so it proved his great punishment. Narrowly he escaped death in the battle of Ramoth-Gilead, the enemy having mistaken him for his ally, the cowardly Ahab, who had laid aside his kingly robes for a disguise; and the destruction of his grandson, King Ahaziah, it is expressly declared (2 Chron. xxii. 7) 'was of God, by coming to Joram,' Ahab's grandson; for 'when Jehu was executing judgment upon the house of Ahab, and found the princes of Judah—he slew them.'

The same principle that when God's people

lean on the world, God employs the world to be their scourge, is exemplified in Hezekiah. After his deliverance by Jehovah's gracious interposition from sickness, ambassadors from the King of Babylon came with presents and a letter. Hezekiah was 'glad of them,' and showed them all his precious things and armour. Instead of leaning on Jehovah alone, his Deliverer from Sennacherib's mighty host, he leaned on worldly resources. Instead of being afraid of the flattery of the Babylonian world-power, he was elated by it. So his punishment, announced by Isaiah, was to correspond to his sin. To Babylon all his stores, along with his sons, should be carried away, even as it was to Babylon he had ostentatiously displayed them (Isa. xxxix.).

So in the case of the whole kingdom, Judah, or Aholibah (Ez. xxiii. 14—22): 'She saw the images of the Chaldeans pourtrayed with vermilion, exceeding in dyed attire upon their heads after the manner of the Babylonians. And as soon as she saw them, she doted upon them.' Then, after 'she was polluted with them,' as the love of passion is close akin to hatred, 'her mind was alienated from them.' Faithless to God, she was faithless also to her sworn engagements to Babylon, her paramour. So God's 'mind *was* alienated from her,' and 'He raised up her

lovers against her.' So Babylon, the world-power for whom she had forsaken God, was made by God the instrument of her punishment in her seventy years' captivity.

One more instance will close our illustration of the principle. The prophet Daniel (xi.) foretells the rise of the Old Testament anti-christ, Antiochus Epiphanes, and his blasphemous persecutions of the Jews so accurately that Porphyry, the enemy of revelation, saw it hopeless to deny its correspondence with history. So he argued that it must have been written subsequently to the events. But as Messianic events fulfilled in Jesus are foretold in Daniel, the Jews, the opponents of Jesus, would never have forged prophecies which confirm His claims. Now the writer of the uninspired history (1 Maccabees i.), traced all the calamities which the Jews suffered to the fact that the Jews introduced heathen customs into Jerusalem. 'In those days there went out from Israel wicked men (Menelaus and others) who persuaded many, Let us go and make a covenant with the heathen around. Wherefore they built a gymnasium at Jerusalem according to the custom of the heathen, and made themselves uncircumcised, and forsook the holy covenant, and joined themselves to the heathen.' In retributive

judgment, God made the instrument of the Jews' sin—the Greek world-power—the instrument of their punishment. Taking up the false but fashionable notion from the Greek philosophy, that the main object of religion is to maintain political and social order, and that all religions are equally good for keeping in check the turbulent masses, the Jews forsook the exclusive strictness of Jehovah's religion for Greek so-called enlightenment. So the Greek king Antiochus was their punisher. Identifying himself with Jupiter Olympus, he commanded that all nations should be one people, and every one leave his peculiar worship. So God's temple was desecrated with swine. The service was discontinued. Many Jews sacrificed to idols and profaned the Sabbath. Others were compelled to walk in procession to Bacchus, bearing ivy. Numbers were slain because they would not conform to idolatry. This was the greatest peril that ever threatened revealed religion and the holy theocracy. For never before had the world-rulers interfered with the religion of the covenant people under them. At last God raised up Judas and the Maccabees as their deliverers; and 'the Feast of Dedication' of the Temple has been kept ever since as the memorial of their deliverance.

Thus we have traced all along from the first the illustrations in Old Testament history of the unchangeable principle that, if the Church forsakes God for the world, the world is made, in righteous retribution, the instrument of her punishment. Surely we cannot but see that God rules over the Church and the world. The Book that so marvellously unfolds God's righteous character, must be Divine. Oh, how our 'heart should stand in awe of God's Word!' (Ps. cxix. 161). At the same time, love to Him should be the constraining motive of obedience; and the Psalmist's principle should be our life-motto, 'I love Thy commandments above gold, and I hate every false way' (verses 127, 128); for 'Cursed is the man that trusteth in man, and maketh flesh his arm, and whose heart departeth from Jehovah' (Jer. xvii. 5).

IV.

THE JEWISH CHURCH'S REJECTION OF MESSIAH FOR THE WORLD, AND HER PUNISHMENT BY THE WORLD.

'*Pilate saith unto them, Shall I crucify your King? The chief priests answered, We have no King but Cæsar*' (John xix. 15).

IT is a fixed principle in God's moral government, as illustrated in the Old Testament instances already considered, that God makes men's own sins the whips wherewith to scourge them. God vindicates His own righteousness not only in punishing His people's transgressions, but in making the instruments of their transgression to become the instruments of their punishment. Let us now trace the same truth in the history of the Jews in New Testament times.

I. When the Lord Jesus came on earth, He chose Judea as His home. The kingly sceptre of David's seed was not gone for ever, but was in abeyance in the Holy Land ever since the *deposition of* Zedekiah by Nebuchadnezzar, 580

years before. The tribal sceptre also continued with Judah; that is, its independence in the main lasted till Christ came: as the prophecy of the dying patriarch Jacob foretold, 'The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a law-giver from between his feet, until Shiloh (*the Prince of Peace*) come' (Gen. xlix. 10). The Kingdom was by no means then designed to depart; but was to be vested in Him upon whose shoulder the government was to be (Isa. ix. 6): for Jacob's prophecy adds as to Messiah, 'Unto Him shall the gathering of the people be.' The angel Gabriel moreover announced to the Virgin Mary before His birth, 'The Lord God shall give Him the throne of His father David; and He shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever, and of His Kingdom there shall be no end' (Luke i. 32). The prophet Ezekiel similarly at the time of the suspension of the Kingdom announced the word of the Lord, 'I will overturn, overturn, overturn it; and it (that is, the Kingdom) shall be no more, until He come whose right it is; and I will give it to Him' (Ez. xxi. 27). This implies that the Kingdom of David which had been promised originally to 'be established for ever' (2 Sam. vii. 16), but which had been suspended now for 580 years, was to be resumed

by Him to Whom pre-eminently and eternally it did belong, and does belong, of right.*

The prophecy in Malachi (iv. 5), 'Behold I will send you Elijah before the coming of the great and dreadful day of Jehovah,' is applied by our Lord to John the Baptist (Matt. xi. 14; xvii. 10, 13). Now the prophecy implies that the Forerunner was to prepare for Jehovah's coming in the greatness of His Kingdom; and John's own announcement was, 'The Kingdom of the heavens is at hand.' So when the wise men from the East sought the Saviour they asked, 'Where is He that is born *King* of the Jews?'

Why then did not the King Messiah immediately manifest His Kingdom? The reason was, 'He came unto His own, and His own received Him not.' Although the chief priests and

* The Ancient Versions all (except Vulgate and Pseudo-Jonathan) translate Gen. xlix. 10, שִׁילֹה, 'He to whom it belongs,' or, 'whose right it is.' This would require the omission of the yod. Very many Hebrew and all the Samaritan MSS. omit it. The reading without the yod, being the harder, is less likely to be a copyist's work; he would be likely to insert it, as making the easier reading. It would be an Aramæan form. Such forms are either the oldest, viz. when the Patriarchs were in contact with the Chaldeans, or not again till the Jews' captivity in Babylon. Jacob for forty years having resided among the Aramæans, or Syrians, would naturally use it. If the yod be *correct, translate,* 'Prince of Peace.'

scribes knew and told Herod where the King was to be born, yet they never went themselves with the wise men to worship Him. Nay more, when the Father, after sending all His prophets in vain to the Jews, last of all sent His Son, saying, 'They will reverence My Son,' they said, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill Him, and let us seize on His inheritance' (Matt. xxi. 38.) The inheritance of the Kingdom was His of right, but the visible manifestation of it was adjourned, through the unbelief of the Jews, whose King pre-eminently He came to be. Just as the possession of Canaan was designed by the grace of God for Israel, directly after the exodus from Egypt, but was adjourned through their unbelief, God had said (Deut. i. 22), 'The Lord thy God hath set the land before thee, go up and possess it:' but they would not go up, because they believed the evil report of the spies and disbelieved the Lord: therefore His sentence on them was, 'After the number of the days in which ye searched the land, even forty days, each day for a year, shall ye bear your iniquities, even forty years, and ye shall know my breach of promise' (Num. xiv. 34).

The Lord Jesus chose the land of the Jews as His birth-place, and destined it to be the ultimate centre of His Kingdom: as it is

written, 'At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of Jehovah, and all the nations shall be gathered unto it, to the name of Jehovah to Jerusalem' (Jer. iii. 17). To the Jews first He announced salvation through Himself. His bowels of compassion yearned over the lost sheep of the house of Israel first (Matt. xv. 24). Gladly would the loving Saviour have folded in His embrace His kinsmen after the flesh; but they spurned all His love. Therefore the kingdom was deferred. 'O Jerusalem, Jerusalem,' was Jesus' touching remonstrance, 'thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!' (xxiii. 37). Again at His triumphal entry into Jerusalem, amidst all the exultation of that hour of kingly glory—the only one that lit with a transient gleam the darkness of His humiliation—even then, the thought of Jerusalem's self-destroying perversity filled Him with tender sorrow. The Royal Conqueror paused in the midst of His triumphal procession to weep! As He came near the city, He wept over it and said, alluding to the name Jerusalem, which means *the possessor of peace*, 'If thou hadst *known*, even thou, at least in this thy day, the

things which belong to thy *peace*, but now they are hid from thine eyes' (Luke xix. 42).

Within five days after, they publicly rejected Him. Their representatives, the chief priests and elders, delivered Him, the rightful King of Israel, into the hands of Pilate, the representative of the Roman King. The Roman Governor, though hardhearted and unscrupulous, was so struck by the majesty, purity, and truth of Jesus his prisoner, that in spite of himself he felt a secret awe before the Lord, and avowed his conviction of Jesus' innocence. But when he would have released Him, the Jews all cried out, 'If thou let this man go, thou art not Cæsar's friend: whosoever maketh himself a king, speaketh against Cæsar' (John xix. 12). Now nothing could have been more outrageous hypocrisy than this. The Jews never ceased to kick against the Roman dominion. They had made many insurrections against Cæsar's authority. And it was a very short time before that they had tempted Jesus, saying, 'Is it lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?' They knew well that if He said 'It was lawful,' the feeling of the people, who hated the Roman authority, would be all arrayed against Him; but if He said 'It was not lawful,' the Roman authorities would punish Him as an exciter of sedition.

This shows how rank was their hypocrisy in urging on Pilate, loyalty to Cæsar, as binding him to crucify Jesus. Once that men give themselves up to the blinding influences of party prejudice and passion, truth and the Word of God are cast aside, and there is no limit to the unscrupulous violence to which they will yield themselves. Pilate, half in mockery, half in earnest, again said, 'Behold your King!' 'Away with Him, crucify Him' was their reply. 'Shall I crucify your King?' said Pilate. The chief priests answered, 'We have no king but Cæsar.' Hereby the Jews deliberately rejected Jesus, the true King, and chose Cæsar, the world's king, to be their king.

God foresaw, and in the exercise of His wonderful prerogative, which brings good out of evil, overruled their rejection of Him, and His crucifixion, and the consequent adjournment of His manifested Kingship, to be the means of introducing the kingdom of grace now, preparatory to the kingdom of glory hereafter.

Much as the Jews hated Cæsar's dominion over Judea, they hated Jesus more. The evil spirit of gross idolatry to which their nation had been so prone formerly, had been purged out by the severe chastisement of the Babylonian captivity. But the pure love of God and man

had not taken in their heart the place which the idols once had possessed. So the evil spirit that had gone out of the nation (to use our Lord's parable,) returned in fuller force than ever: having taken seven other spirits more wicked than himself, and finding the nation swept and garnished with merely an outward show of religion, he entered in and dwelt there: self-righteousness, spiritual pride (because of their Abrahamic descent, and their possession of the Law and the Temple) and contempt of the Gentiles, combined with covetousness and lust under a hypocritical exterior, made their last state worse than the first (Luke xi. 26), so that they were resolved, in the face of the clearest evidence, to reject the claims of Jesus.

Yet even on the Cross of Calvary, God's Providence marvellously ordered it, that the very representative of the world-power, Pilate, who condemned Him for claiming to be King, himself proclaimed by the inscription in the three great languages of the civilized world, Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, that 'Jesus of Nazareth' is indeed 'King of the Jews.' What makes this the more remarkable is, the Jewish chief priests remonstrated with Pilate, 'Write not, the King of the Jews, but that He said, I am King of the Jews.' But Pilate would not alter a syllable of

what he had written. This Divine intimation of the truth might have opened their eyes to the fact that, in spite of their rejecting Jesus, He still is their King, and they cannot alter it.

One more appeal the Lord made to them after His Ascension. It was no longer in person, but by His Spirit in His apostles. A chosen remnant accepted Him; and to them gave He power to become the sons of God. But the nation, as such, only became the more bitter in rejecting Him, and so resisted the Holy Ghost. Thus they fulfilled our Lord's words in the parable, 'His citizens hated Him, and sent a message *after Him* (that is, *after He had withdrawn from them* into the far-off country at His ascension into heaven) saying, 'We will not have this man to reign over us' (Luke xix. 14).

II. So we come to the second part of our subject, the punishment of the Jews by that very world-power for whom they denied their Heavenly King. When they had not only killed the Lord Jesus and their own prophets, but also persecuted the apostles and evangelists speaking by the Holy Spirit, and forbade them to speak to the Gentiles that they might be saved, thereby they 'filled up' the full measure of their always recurring sins, and 'the wrath came upon them to the uttermost' (1 Thess. ii. 15, 16).

Messiah was commissioned to feed the flock; and He did feed all who were willing to be fed by Him. But the mass of the nation by their own wicked and malignant opposition to Him, instead of being sheep of His pasture, became 'the flock of the slaughter' (Zech. xi. 4). The unfaithfulness of God's professing people put a sword into the hand of their enemies. Judah's sin took away Judah's defence. The rulers of the Jews by their rapacious covetousness and selfishness virtually sold their country to Rome. They flattered themselves, that by giving up the holy Jesus to the Romans for crucifixion, they were securing the Jewish nation on a firm footing, resting on the power of Rome. The often-abused pretext of state expediency was their plea. 'If we let Him alone, all will believe on Him: and the Romans shall come and take away both our place and nation.' Caiaphas, the High priest, added, 'It is expedient for us that one man should die for the people, and that the whole nation perish not' (John xi. 48, 50). Never can anything be politically, socially, or personally expedient, which is morally wrong. The Jews thought that they had sold Jesus, and saved their nation; but they had really sold themselves and their country to Rome by selling the King of Israel to the Gentile world-

power. For the principle of God must eternally hold good, when His professing people forsake Him and lean on the world, God makes the very world which had been the instrument of their sin, to become the instrument of their punishment. The Jews who forsook Jesus the King of Israel for Cæsar the king of the world, found Cæsar to be the executioner of God's wrath upon them in destroying and scattering them. They were retributively given over to their own wilful blindness and consequent doom, since they would not come to Him who would have given them light and life.

How strikingly did the Jews' speech, and act, and consequent punishment, fulfil to the letter Zechariah's prophecy (xi. 6)! 'Lo,' said God, 'I will deliver the men, every one into his neighbour's hand, and into the hand of *his king*, and they shall smite the land.' Judea had made Cæsar 'his king,' when His people said, 'We have no king but Cæsar.' God took them at their word, in righteous retribution, and gave them up to the Roman King Vespasian, with Titus under him. Within thirty-seven years after the Jews' utterance of the words, the Roman King 'smote their land' and broke up their polity.*

* The Hebrew for 'smite' (Zech. xi. 6) means literally, '*dash in pieces*:' נכה.

The city might have long withstood the Roman besiegers but for internal feuds, every man's hand being against his neighbour, as Zechariah foretold. The Lord Jesus had forewarned them, 'When the (heavenly) King heard thereof (that is, of their slaying His servants) He sent forth His armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burnt up their city' (Matt. xxii. 7). This once 'holy and beautiful house where their fathers had praised God, was burnt' down, as Jesus had said, 'Behold your house is left unto you desolate' (Matt. xxiii. 38; comp. Isa. lxiv. 11). Thousands were slain in the siege, and hundreds of thousands sold as slaves, and the remnant were scattered in all lands. So Jehovah cut asunder His staff 'Beauty,' that is, His beautiful manifestation of grace to Israel in His Temple: He also cut asunder His other staff 'Bands' the sign of the brotherly covenant which once united the nation. The fratricidal strife of factions within Jerusalem on the eve of its fall, whilst the Romans were thundering at its gates, was the indication of the breaking of the Bands (Zech. xi. 7—11).

Moreover, since the Jews would not have 'the good Shepherd,' they were given up to the 'foolish,' that is, the *bad* shepherd, who would 'tear them in pieces.' The Lord has kept His

word: He has 'miserably destroyed those wicked men.' The Kingdom of God has been taken from them, and given to the elect Judeo-Gentile Church, bringing forth the fruits thereof. The stone cut out without human hands from the mountain (Dan. ii. 34, 35, 44, 45) lay at first despised on the ground; and because of its lowliness, and the imposing outward grandeur of the image of the world-power, all resplendent in gold, silver, brass, and iron, the Jews stumbled at the stone of offence, and bowed to the world-power's showy image. But the stone had two grand points of superiority to the image. It was cut by Divine power from the everlasting heavenly mountain; whereas the image was of mere human construction. Secondly, the stone was rounded off to perfection, and was homogeneous in its material; whereas the image was of heterogeneous materials, and a mere mimicry of man, not the reality. The stone was Jesus Christ, the Rock of Ages. This stone the Jewish builders rejected: but, by the Lord's doing, it in due time becomes head of the corner. The stone which came from the mountain shall hereafter become 'a great mountain, itself filling the whole earth' with the heavenly kingdom from which it originated. Whosoever now falls or stumbles on this stone is *broken*. This has been the Jews' bitter *experience*.

The rest of the prophecy is yet to be fulfilled. The Jews only *stumbled* at the stone, but have not fallen past recovery. As Paul saith (Rom. xi. 11), 'Have they stumbled that they should fall (finally)? God forbid; but rather through their fall, salvation is come unto the Gentiles.' Israel's rising again is to be coincident with the *utter and perpetual fall* of the world-power which smote Israel;* as our Lord goes on to prophesy, 'But on whomsoever the stone shall fall, it will *grind him to powder*' (Matt. xxi. 42—44); and as Daniel previously had foreseen, 'The stone cut

* Comp. Isa. xxvii. 7, 'Has He smitten him (Israel) as He smote those that smote him?' No. Mercy tempers His wrath as to Israel. Dr. Richardson, F.R.S., in a Lecture on the Vitality of the Jews, stated that in Prussian Germany one is still-born in 97·75 among Jews, 1 in 47·29 among Roman Catholics, 1 in 42·47 among Protestants. Mayer estimates that at Fürth Jewish children die at the rate of 10 per cent., Christian children 14 per cent. Neefville at Frankfort makes the ratio, 12·9 among Jewish children under five, 24·1 among Christians; 54 per cent. Jews reached 50 years, 38 per cent. among Christians; 27 per cent. Jews reached 70, 13 per cent. Christians. Half the Jews reached 53 years and 1 month, half the Christians died at 36. The Jews marry less frequently, have fewer children, but the vitality of these is such that their population increases above the others. The Jews' mortality is highest at the latest period of life, lightest at its beginning. They have less hereditary diseases, as scrofula, consumption, rheumatism. This vitality is the more wonderful when we remember the persecution they formerly endured, their being shut up in one close quarter in cities, and their exclusion from social privileges.

out without hands smote the image upon his feet of iron and clay, and brake them to pieces; then was the iron, the clay, the brass, the silver, and the gold broken to pieces together, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors, and the wind carried them away, that no place was found for them' (ii. 35).

III. In conclusion, let us consider, as closely connected with our subject, Israel's future. By denying the King of Israel for the sake of the world-power, Israel brought on herself her punishment by that very world-power. So, in accordance with the same retributive righteousness of God, when Israel in the last days, moved by the grace of God then to be given to her, shall turn to her Lord from the world, the world shall be employed by God as the instrument of her restoration, and shall honour her as the centre of spiritual blessings to all nations.

In their present dispersion, which has lasted for upwards of eighteen centuries, they are still a wonderful people. They are scattered among all nations, a homeless race with a hopeless creed. As God foretold that the penalty of their apostasy should be (Deut. xxviii. 65), 'Among these nations thou shalt find no ease, neither shall the sole of thy foot have rest: But the Lord shall *give* thee a trembling heart, and failing of eyes,

and sorrow of mind.' Yet contrary to the analogy of all peoples that have mixed among other nations and become consequently fused with them into one whole, the Jews have never amalgamated into one nation with those amongst whom they dwell.

Again: they cling with unparalleled tenacity to a creed, the very essence of which is sacrifice at the one only lawful place for sacrifice, the Temple: and yet God's providence, by destroying the Temple, and by leaving their land in the hand of the Mohammedan, has made it impossible they should fulfil the first requirements of their religion. What is the solution of this marvellous paradox? It is because God hath said by His prophet (Hosea iii. 4, 5), 'The children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod (that is, without the priesthood); afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek Jehovah their God, and David their king, and shall fear Jehovah and His goodness in the latter days.' Yes; they are preserved distinct to be now the standing miracle of history and to prove the revelation of God, and also to be ready for receiving hereafter the fulfilment of God's promise (Jer. xxxii. 37, 40), 'Behold, I will

gather them out of all countries whither I have driven them, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them.'

The Lord's first work will be to turn them to that Saviour and King whom they have so long denied, and then to establish them in their own land: 'I will pour upon the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of grace and of supplications, and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced, and they shall mourn for Him, as one mourneth for his only son, and shall be in bitterness for Him, as one that is in bitterness for his first-born' (Zech. xii. 10). As the sun draws upward the vapours from the earth, so Jesus, the Sun of righteousness, shining into their hearts, shall elicit tears of bitter repentance for the sin which caused His cruel suffering.

The outpouring of the Spirit on Israel shall be the necessary preliminary to the conversion of all nations. As the Psalmist (cii. 13—15) foretells, 'Thou shalt arise, and have mercy on Zion: for the time to favour her, yea, the set time, is come. So shall the heathen fear the name of Jehovah, and all the kings of the earth Thy glory.' Observe the emphatic word 'so.' When the prayers of the saints are heard, and Jehovah

shall have mercy on Zion, then, and not till then, shall all nations and kings turn to the Lord.

Moreover a sign of the time is added which is being fulfilled in our own days, 'For Thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof.' The leading nations of Christendom, and ours the foremost, are now exploring every corner and examining every relic of the holy land of Jerusalem; an earnest of the mercy which God soon will extend to His ancient people. That consummation the Psalmist connects with Christ's coming to reign (verse 16), 'When Jehovah shall build up Zion, then shall He appear in His glory;' as also is implied in the Lord's own words to the Jews, 'Ye shall not see Me henceforth till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord' (Matt. xxiii. 39).

Another striking fact foretold is, that, just as the world-powers scattered Israel, when Israel forsook Jehovah for them, so shall the world-powers be employed as God's very instruments to restore her, when she returns to Him. So Isaiah (xlix. 22) foretells, 'Thus saith Jehovah Elohim, Behold, I will lift up Mine hand to the Gentiles, and set up My standard to the people, and they shall bring thy sons in their arms, and thy daughters shall be carried upon

their shoulders, and kings shall be thy nursing fathers, and queens thy nursing mothers': so again (lxvi. 20), 'And they shall bring all your brethren for an offering unto Jehovah out of all nations upon horses, chariots, litters, mules, and swift beasts to My holy mountain Jerusalem.'

'Every one left of all the nations which came up against Jerusalem shall go up from year to year to worship the King, Jehovah of hosts, and to keep the feast of tabernacles' (Zech. xiv. 16). That feast once commemorated the happy change from Israel's wilderness sojourn in tents to their settled homes in Canaan. The future feast of tabernacles shall celebrate the marvellous transition from their sojourn among 'the wilderness of the Gentile peoples' (Ez. xx. 35) to their fixed and blessed permanent home in their restored land, with Jehovah Jesus as their manifested King. Then shall the joy which usually characterized that feast be eclipsed by a joy exceeding all joys, when shall be fulfilled the prediction (Zeph. iii. 17), 'Jehovah thy God in the midst of thee is mighty, He will save: He will rejoice over thee with joy, He will rest in His love, He will joy over thee with singing.'

Let us learn the solemn lesson which this profoundly interesting history is designed to teach us: first, the awful tendency in even professing

believers to compromise religious principle for worldly expediency; secondly, the sure penalty of such a compromise,—the world, the instrument of our sin, will be made the instrument of our punishment; thirdly, the grace of God triumphing at last over the Church's backslidings. So may we adore and love and serve this gracious and glorious Lord, and be waiting and praying for His coming to be 'a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel.'

V.

THE JUDÆO-GENTILE CHURCH'S CONFORMITY TO THE WORLD, AND HER PUNISHMENT BY THE WORLD.

'*The ten horns upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire*' (Rev. xvii. 16).

THE Christian Church of the New Testament has succeeded to the place once held by the Israelite Church of the Old Testament. The parent stock is Jewish: for our Lord and His Apostles were all Jews. But some branches have been broken off, that the Gentile believers might be grafted in (Rom. xi. 17, 20). It was because of unbelief that those were broken off: and it is by faith that these stand. 'Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles be filled' (Luke xxi. 24). Our dispensation answers to 'the times of the Gentiles.' They are the times of the age wherein God is 'visiting the Gentiles, to take out of them a people for His name' (Acts xv. 14). Not a

Church comprehending all nations, but an elect remnant from Jews and Gentiles, the latter, however, being predominant, is being gathered into the fold of the Lord Jesus. The process of grace is now going forward, and shall go on until the full number of the elect shall be accomplished: and then 'the fulness of the Gentiles' (Rom. xi. 25) having come in, a new order of things shall commence, when 'the receiving of Israel shall be as life from the dead' to the whole Gentile world (verses 12, 15).

Our Judæo-Gentile dispensation answers to the time when 'the fulness of the Gentiles' is being gathered in. The Greek term (πλήρωμα) for 'fulness' is the very one applied in the parable of our Lord to the new piece of cloth put in to *fill up* a rent in the old garment (Matt. ix. 16). The excision of the Jews nationally caused a rent or chasm in the Church. Our Judæo-Gentile Church is the filling-up piece which stops the gap. Thus 'the fall' of the Jews is for the time being 'the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles' (Rom. xi. 12).

How high then are our privileges, in that the Gentile wild olive-tree has been 'graffed in among' the Jewish believers of the original Church, and 'with them partakes of the root

and fatness of the olive-tree.' But with high privileges come great responsibilities. If 'the mystery of Christ' be now revealed to us 'which in other ages was not made known unto the sons of men—that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs, and of the same body, and partakers of His promise in Christ by the Gospel' (Eph. iii. 5, 6), the same Apostle warns us, 'Behold the goodness and severity of God; on them which fell, severity; but toward thee, goodness, if thou continue in His goodness; otherwise thou also shall be cut off: for if God spared not the natural branches, take heed lest He spare not thee' (Rom. xi. 21, 22).

Let us consider consecutively the visible New Testament Church's (I.) original faithfulness in part: (II.) then her unfaithfulness: (III.) lastly, her retributive punishment.

I. In Revelation (ch. xii.), the Church of God appears as a 'woman.' The characteristic of woman, in contradistinction to man, is the being subject; surrendering herself, as receptive; yielding herself to her husband, as her head. Such is man's due relation to God, to be subject to, and to receive from God. Autonomy and independence make man his own God and head: in the self-deifying spirit of those described by the Psalmist (xii. 4), 'Our lips are our own; who

is lord over us?' On the other hand, woman-like receptivity constitutes faith. As the individual becomes a child of God by faith (Gal. iii. 26), so the children of God collectively are the woman that is, the Church. 'She brought forth a *male-child:*' for so the Greek * expresses it (verse 5). Christ, 'the seed of the woman' (Gen. iii. 15), is that man-child; born of the woman, as the Son of man, and so made under the Law for man's sake; yet also, as the Son of God, He is the male-child, and so Husband of the Church. All whose life is in themselves, severed from Him, lose the image of God, and standing in their own strength sink to the level of beasts, with face grovelling earthwards.

Hence in Daniel (vii. and viii.) the godless world-powers are represented, with all their merely brute might, as only 'beasts' of the earth; whereas 'the Son of man' and His Kingdom come *from Heaven:* just as the woman in Revelation (xii.) is seen 'in Heaven.' The two beasts of Revelation (xiii. 1, 11) rise 'out of the sea,' and 'out of the earth' respectively: their origin is not of heaven, but of earth earthy. The woman, on the contrary, though in the world, is not of the world. True manliness is inseparable from godliness, for man was made in the image of

* Υἱὸς ἄρρην.

God. The world-power may assume the likeness of man, as in Nebuchadnezzar's image (Dan. ii. 31—33, iii. 1); but it is a lifeless unreality. But the woman, whilst on earth, 'appears in heaven,' where her Lord is. The pure Church 'sets her affection (*mind*) on the things above, not on the things on the earth'* whereas the worldly 'mind earthly things' (Phil. iii. 19).

The woman appears 'clothed with the sun;" for the Church, clothed with the Lord Jesus, 'the Sun of righteousness,' is bearer of His divine light to the world. 'The moon is under her feet.' For the moon, though above the sea and earth, is connected with both, attracting them, and being attracted by them; she is the earth's satellite. The moon cannot change darkness into day: it represents the world religion and science in relation to the supernatural world. The Church has the moon under her feet; but upon her head a coronet consisting of the twelve stars, the heavenly lights. These twelve stars answer to the twelve apostles, who in the New Testament Church correspond to the twelve patriarchs of the twelve tribes in the Old Testament Church.

As on the one hand Christ is the seed of the woman, so on the other the woman, the bride,

* Col. iii. 2, Τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε, '*Mind* the things above.'

the Church, was formed from His rent side, 'bone of His bone, flesh of His flesh.' The type was Eve, formed out of the opened side of the sleeping Adam, and then joined as one flesh with him in holy marriage (Eph. v. 30. Gen. ii. 23). The Church is truly womanly, in proportion as she derives all her glory and her beauty from Christ. She then is in her true position, 'Coming up from the wilderness, leaning upon her Beloved' (Song of Sol. viii. 5). But when she leans upon the world instead, she becomes in a degree *beastlike*, though not 'the beast.'

The dragon, Satan, after having tried in vain to 'devour the woman's child as soon as it was born,' by the instrumentality of Herod, the slayer of all the male children of Bethlehem, next endeavoured to stifle the infant Church. As Israel had its time of first bridal love, at the exodus from Egypt into the wilderness (Jer. ii. 2), so the Church's wilderness time of first love was the Apostolic age, when separate from the world it had no city here, but sought one to come.

'The dragon, when cast unto the earth, persecuted the woman. And to the woman were given two *wings* of a great *eagle*, that she might fly into the wilderness, where she hath a place prepared of God' (Rev. xii. 4, 6, 13, 14). The wilderness is the Gentile world (Ez. xx. 35)

to which the Kingdom of God passed over from Israel. The Church of the New Testament shares in God's grace to the Old Testament Church: 'I bare you on *eagle's wings*, and brought you unto myself' (Ex. xix. 4). 'Her place was prepared of God where she was nourished for a time, times, and half a time* from the face of the serpent.' The Book of Acts describes the Church's passing from Jerusalem,

* The forty-two months of the Church's wilderness sojourn before she reaches her millennial land of rest answer to the forty-two stages of Israel's journey through the desert to Canaan (Rev. xi. 2, 3; xii. 6, 14; xiii. 5). These are 'the times of the Gentiles,' whilst 'Jerusalem is trodden down of the Gentiles,' in our Lord's words; or in Daniel's words (xii. 7), 'When He shall have accomplished to scatter the power of the holy people.' This number *three and a half* symbolizes the time of the world's oppression of the Church; it is half of the divine *seven*. 1260 *literal* years would not nearly cover the whole period of Jerusalem's treading down by the Gentiles. Three and a half years was the period of Christ's witness, and of the two witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, and of heaven's being shut up under Elijah. The *seven times* of the Gentile monarchies (Lev. xxvi. 24) during Israel's rejection will probably be succeeded by Antichrist's seven years. If the 1260 represent the period of the Papal harlot, dating from A.D. 754, when Pepin granted her first temporal dominions, we arrive at A.D. 2014 as the end; then Antichrist's three and a half years of open enmity to Christ follow, ushering in the Millennium. Witnessing *churches* occupying 1260 years, thus precede witnessing *individuals* in the final 1260 days or three and a half years. The 1260, 1290, 1335, and 2300 (Dan. vii. 25; viii. 14; xii. 7, 8, 11, 12) probably have also a special reference in some *mystical* sense to *the times of Jerusalem's being trodden by the Gentiles*. The event will show.

which by apostasy had become an Egypt, to Rome, her place appointed by God, the seat of the Gentile world-empire. Rome's eagle wing shielded Paul, the instrument of this transmigration, from Jewish adversaries, who were Satan's tools. By degrees the Church gained 'her place,' until under Constantine the empire professed Christianity.

Then the serpent poured the flood of German hordes on Rome, to overwhelm, if possible, the nascent Christian Church. But 'the earth,' that is, the consolidated world of civilization and Christian order, swallowed up the flood, that is, absorbed under their humanizing influences, the barbarian invaders. Unable to destroy the Church as a visible whole, 'the dragon made war with the remnant of the woman's seed, who have the testimony of Jesus Christ,' that is, with the elect remnant, the true saints in it.

II. So far we have seen the Church faithful, though persecuted. But a new danger arose. As Satan failed to destroy the Church by persecution, he tried another course, to seduce and corrupt her. Fatally he succeeded, through the instrumentality of the world. St. John in the 17th chapter of Revelation sees a sad transformation—the once pure woman has become a harlot! Her whom he once saw clothed with

the sun, and having the earth's moon under her feet, he now sees mounted on a scarlet beast, herself clothed with scarlet like it: 'Decked with gold and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand full of abominations and filthiness of her fornications, and upon her forehead a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS AND ABOMINATIONS, and drunken with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus.' It is true she is not the beast; for, however degraded, the Church still bears the human image of her God whom she dishonours. But the beast, or godless world-power which carries her, was never anything but a beast, grovelling to the earth, and without the life of God in it. The harlot is the apostate Church: as Isaiah declares (i. 21), 'How is the faithful city become an harlot!' But the beast is the world-power which culminates at last in its head, the personal Antichrist. If the beast be Antichrist, the apostate Church cannot be Antichrist; for the harlot is not the beast, however beast-like she become.

Yet though the harlot or the apostate Church, and the Beast or Antichrist, are distinct, they are connected by the designation 'Babylon,' common to both. For Babylon was the first representative *of the beast* (Dan. vii. 4): and 'Babylon' is the

name also given in Rev. xvii. to the harlot or apostate Church, as 'Jerusalem' (Gal. iv. 26), on the contrary, represents the pure Church.

Well might John startle at the change: 'I wondered with great admiration.' That the world should be beastly, is natural; but that she whose calling was to be the faithful bride, should become a Babylonish harlot, is monstrous! The elect, it is true, do not apostatize. But Christendom as a whole, and as the visible Church, has apostatized from her high calling, and her first love. The true woman, the Lamb's Bride, the invisible Church, remains hidden in the visible, which has become the harlot. The true Church shall be manifested visibly only 'when Christ our life shall be manifested.'*

The Church of Rome is the prominent type of the harlot. For she has rested on the world-power, and assumed its gauds, and claimed supremacy over it, and used it as her tool to shed 'the blood of the saints and of the martyrs of Jesus.' The beast has seven heads which are 'seven mountains on which the woman sitteth" (Rev. xvii. 9, 10). Rome was represented on imperial coins as a woman seated on seven hills. But as it is added (as the Greek probably ought to be translated), '*they* are seven

* Col. iii. 4, ὅταν ὁ Χριστὸς φανερωθῇ ἡ ζωὴ ἡμῶν.

kings' or kingdoms, the seven hills on which the apostate Church sits are symbolical rather than literal, and represent probably seven God-opposed world empires, of which the seven-hilled Rome is the modern embodiment, Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia, Greece, Rome (including the modern Latin Kingdoms), and the Germano-Slavonic empire. The deeper the Church penetrated into heathendom, the more she herself became heathenish. Instead of overcoming the world, she was overcome by it. The Roman and the Greek Churches are in their very principle harlot-like, by reason of their systematized idolatry and worldliness.

The Evangelical Protestant Churches are in *principle* the chaste woman; and the Reformation was the woman's protest against the harlot, and her worship of the host, veneration of images and relics, invocation of the Virgin* and Saints, and other unscriptural errors, as well as against her imperious pride and intense covetousness.† But Rome is not the *only* Babylon. If it

* Witness Pope Pius the Ninth's Encyclical Letter consulting the bishops as to the Immaculate Conception: 'Ye know very well, the whole of our confidence is placed in the Most Holy Virgin. If there be any hope in us, any grace, if any salvation, it redounds to us from her.'

† For instance, her claim to be 'the mother and mistress *of all churches*.'—Creed of Pope Pius IV., Article X. And

were, much of the Scriptural profit of Revelation would be lost to us. The harlot 'sitteth upon many waters,' and '*all* nations have drunk of the wine of her fornication' (xvii. 2; xviii. 3). In *practice* the Protestant Churches too have become part of the harlot, Babylon, in so far as they yield to 'covetousness, which is idolatry,' and 'conformity to the world,' instead of conformity to the image of Christ (Col. iii. 5. Rom. viii. 29; xii. 2). Just as the Jews at the return from Babylon gave up the idols to which formerly they had been so prone, but ere long yielded themselves to the more subtle idols of spiritual pride, national bigotry, and lust and mammon; so the Reformed Churches, after renouncing the grosser idolatry of mediævalism, took up the idols of self-seeking, world-worship, and carnal policy. Christendom as a whole tends towards becoming the harlot. The Babylonish garment of Achan (Josh. vii. 21) was the cursed thing in Israel which disabled it from standing before the enemy. So worldly Babylonianism is what robs the professing Church of spiritual power.

There is an earlier apostasy marked in 1 Tim.

her sale of indulgences. The contrast is striking: *Hē pórne kaì tò therion: Hē númphe kaì tò arnion:* the whore and the beast: the Bride and the Lamb. The Greek syllables and accents correspond.

iv. 1: 'The Spirit speaketh expressly, that in the latter times some shall depart from the faith, giving heed to seducing spirits, and doctrines of *demons*, speaking lies in hypocrisy, *forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from meats*, which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving.' This strikingly corresponds to the mediæval apostasy.

But in 2 Tim. iii. 1, where the end is near, the phrase is altered from 'latter' to 'last,' and from 'times' to 'days;' from 'the latter times' to 'the last days.' Here we have a portrait drawn, to which our own times have a striking resemblance: 'in the last days perilous times shall come; for men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, implacable, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God, having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof, ever learning and never able to come to the knowledge of the truth.' Spiritualism and necromancy too are mentioned. 'As Jannes and Jambres (the magicians) withstood Moses, so these resist the truth.' Comp. Mal. iii. 5. Rev. xxi. 8: 'sorcerers.' Much the same sins are

attributed in Rom. i. 29, &c., to *heathen*. So that it is a relapse to heathenism with its beast-like propensities. Thus the hotbed is being prepared for the manifestation of the beast. As the beast's deadly wound in one of his heads was the overthrow of heathen idolatry by the triumph of Christianity (Rev. xiii. 3), so the healing of the deadly wound was the reintroduction of idolatry by the mediæval Church's apostasy. Again, as Christianity inflicted a deadly wound on the infidel and godless practices of heathenism, so its healing is the reintroduction of these infidel elements under the coming *last open Antichrist*, the worst form of the beast.

It is most significant that the number of the Beast is six hundred and sixty-six, which, in its only other uncontradicted occurrence in all Scripture, is used of the gold talents coming in yearly to Solomon.* It is also remarkable, that there are but two out of 2000 nouns in the Greek Testament, of which the numerical value is just 666. The one is the Greek for 'tradition,' † the great instrument which Satan has used for corrupting the Church's *doctrine;* the other is that for 'wealth,' ‡ or easy means; the pursuit

* 1 Kings x. 14. 2 Chron. ix. 13. But Adonikam's children, though 666 in Ezra ii. 13, are 667 in Neh. vii. 18.

† Παράδοσις, Matt. xv. 3, 6.

‡ Εὐπορία, Acts xix. 25. *Six* is the number of the doomed

of which has been Satan's great instrument for corrupting the Church's *practice.* The latter word was used in Ephesus, one of the seven cities to which the book of Revelation is addressed. Demetrius, the silversmith of the idol Diana's shrines, there alarmed his fellow-craftsmen by telling them that Christianity would endanger their *livelihood:* 'Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our *wealth,*' or *livelihood.*

We can hardly deny that even our Protestant Churches and their members too much lean upon

world, next to the sacred *seven,* but severed from it; whence there is a pause between the sixth and the seventh seal, the sixth and the seventh trumpet. The judgments on the world are complete in *six;* the *seven* ushers in Christ's Kingdom. As *twelve* symbolize the Church, so *six,* its half, the world kingdom broken. The number three and a half, the world kingdom's times, is half of the sacred *seven,* implying continuity broken off. The six in units, tens, and hundreds (666) implies a threefold declension from the *perfection* symbolized by seven. The first two letters of Christ (XP), Christian Rome's monogram, represent *seven* hundred, the perfect number. The 666 (XΞs) mimic, but do not reach, the radicals of Christ (XPs). The solution above accords with the sound principle that *Scripture mysteries are to be solved by Scripture itself.* Solomon's yearly acquisition of 666 talents contravened Deut. xvii. 17, 'Neither shall the king greatly multiply to himself silver and gold.' The harlot riding on the beast has her 'merchandize of gold,' and all other elements of worldly wealth, and 'bodies and souls of men' (Rev. xviii. 12, 13). How needful was the warning of the last of the Apostles, 'Little children, keep yourselves from idols'! (1 John v. 21).

the world, seek its gains, and adopt its self-seeking policy, instead of witnessing against its God-forgetting fashions, opinions, and aims.

III. So we come, lastly, to the Church's retributive punishment. The instrument of the Church's sin becomes the instrument of the Church's punishment. The beast turns upon the harlot who sat upon it, 'hates her, and with its ten horns makes her desolate and naked, eats her flesh, and burns her with fire.' This is just what the Romish Church has suffered within these last few years throughout the European continent. The world-powers, France, Italy, Austria, Spain, and Germany, upon which she formerly leaned, and which she spiritually ruled, have one and all turned against her, and stripped her of her temporal possessions. This answers to the Greek of Rev. xvii. 16: 'They shall eat her *masses of flesh*' (σάρκας), i. e. her *carnalities*.

How striking a retribution it is, that having obtained her first temporal dominions * by recognizing the usurper Pepin as lawful King of France, she should be lately stripped of those her

* The exarchate of Ravenna, the kingdom of Lombardy, and the state of Rome. The first Napoleon in 1809 confiscated the Papal dominions. His nephew, Louis Napoleon, severed large parts of the Pope's territory, and attached them to the kingdom of Italy.

first dominions by another usurper of France, the Napoleonic dynasty! Under another figure St. John describes this process of draining off the apostate Church's resources, as 'the drying up of the waters of the Euphrates' on which Babylon was situated (xvi. 12).*

* Compare Rev. xvii. 1, 15, 'The great whore sitteth upon many waters. The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples and multitudes, and nations and tongues.' The drying up of the Euphrates, on which Babylon was situated, has a double and synchronous fulfilment. Mohammèd was in the cave, A.D. 606—610. His Hegira flight from Mecca to Medina was 622. 1260 years added will bring us to the fall of the Turks, the successors of the Saracens, the scourge of the idols of gold, silver, and brass, &c., sent on apostate Christendom from the region of the Euphrates (Rev. ix. 13—20). Thereby the way is being made, before our eyes, for the return of the Jews, 'the kings of (Greek *from*) the East,' to their own land, as God hath promised; just as originally Cyrus' drying up of the Euphrates' channel opened the way into Babylon, and so opened to the Jews (Jehovah's king-priests. Ex. xix. 6,) the return from Babylon (Isa. x. 26; xi. 11—15. See Zech. x. 9—11). At the same time, A.D. 606, the Emperor Phocas confirmed Justinian's grant of headship to the Pope, and gave Boniface the new title of *Universal Bishop*. 1260 added to this brings us to our times, when the waters of mystical Euphrates, the world resources of the beast power, are being withdrawn from the mystical Babylon, the harlot or apostate Church, that the way may be prepared for Christ's transfigured saints returning from the East, to reign as king-priests with Him (Isa. xl. 3. Ez. xliii. 2. Zech. xiv. 4, 5. Rev. i. 6; xix. 8, 13, 14). Babylon must fall, that Jerusalem, literal and spiritual, may rise. 'The kings of the earth' (Rev. xvi. 14) shall be superseded by the Lord from heaven and 'the Kings of (*from*) the East' with *Him (Ez. xxi. 27)*.

So far the prophecy is fulfilled to the letter. It only remains that the world-power should burn the apostate Church with fire. What this exactly shall be, remains to be seen. Even the professing evangelical Churches, so far as they contain Babylonian elements, shall share in Babylon's doom. The Church going a whoring after the world, as if it were the reality, instead of witnessing against its godlessness, is false to her profession. So the world, which for a time used her to further its ends, and to sanction its carnality, whilst all the while hating Christ's unworldly religion, at last executes God's wrath upon her, as an unreality whose sanction it can dispense with, and whose aid it no longer cares for. Already symptoms appear of the crisis, when the world will rid itself of the nominal profession of Christianity, which it never really relished. So entirely void of reality was the world-powers' profession of Christianity that in Dan. vii. 7, 8, no notice is taken of that profession; but from the fourth form of the world-kingdom emanates the blasphemous 'little horn,' the haughty opponent of God, and persecutor of the saints. The men of worldly science are more and more casting doubts on the revelation of God and denying the exclusive claims of Christianity to rule the conscience and the life.

Socialism (another form of worldliness), infidelity, and false spiritualism are the 'three unclean spirits' from the mouth of the beast, the dragon, and the false prophet respectively, preparing the way for the suppression of the apostate Church, and the development of the beast (Rev. xvi. 13, 14). Our Lord asks, 'When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?' (Luke xviii. 8.)*

* The 'little horn' with a 'mouth speaking great things' answers to the Apocalyptic 'beast' with a 'mouth speaking great things' (Dan. vii. 3, 7, 8, 11, 20, 21, 25 with Rev. xiii. 1, 5—7), *a polity*. St. Paul's (2 Thess. ii.) 'man of sin,' 'the lawless one,' who opposeth himself' (ὁ ἀντικείμενος, the adversary), answers to St. John's *ho Antichristos, an individual* (1 John ii. 18, 22; iv. 3). He states that first cometh '*the* falling away' (ἡ ἀποστασία), the article meaning either *the predicted* apostasy, or, as Bishop Middleton explains, the apostasy *of which the several acts make up one whole.* The Papal Kingdom, springing from the fourth Kingdom, answers to this; also to Daniel's (vii.) 'little horn' from the divided fourth-beast kingdom (lasting three and a half times); also to the first beast of Rev. xiii., including the *Greek* apostate Kingdom. 'Apostasy,' in the Greek Testament, means *defection* (Acts xxi. 21. Heb. iii. 12). See especially 1 Tim. iv. 1, which gives the very marks of the Papal and Greek Churches, rather than open denial of Christ. But the little horn springing out of the *third* Kingdom (Dan. viii. and xi.), Græco-Macedonia, points to Antiochus Epiphanes, the open opponent of God, the precursor of the last Antichrist to be destroyed by Christ's appearing (Dan. xii. 1. Zech. xii.; xiii., xiv.). Daniel marks that the second little horn refers to the adversary of *the Jews* (who shall receive him, coming in his own name, and shall be afterwards oppressed by him: John v. *43; Zech.* xi. 15, 16; Dan. ix., xi., xii.) by using the *Hebrew*

Brethren, these are solemn realities. The part of the prophecy, so far fulfilled, is a pledge that

from chaps. viii. to xii., but the Chaldean in i.—vii., concerning *the Gentiles*. As, then, the former beast is the mediæval apostate *Kingdom*, the second beast or false prophet (Rev. xvi. 13) out of the earth (society consolidated and civilized, as opposed to 'the Sea,' yet still of earth, earthy), and the bottomless pit (xi. 7; xiii. 11; xvi. 13; xvii. 8; xix. 20; xx. 10) is the *individual* Antichrist, with 'horns like a lamb,' feigning the Lamb of God, and 'doing great wonders,' as Paul's 'adversary' (2 Thess. ii. 9) does. As champion of the 'apostasy,' or first beast, he will breathe life into its decrepitude, and combine in himself forces heretofore mercifully kept distinct, infidelity and superstition, against religion, liberty, and law. Our times seem ripening for this unholy alliance. Rationalism, Romanism, or its successor, Spiritualism, and lawless liberalism, are the three evil spirits which 'gather the kings of the whole world together to the battle (Greek, *war*) of that great day of God Almighty.' The battle-field is named Armageddon, i.e. *the hill of Megiddo*, the scene of Josiah's defeat and death, because he came down from his spiritual elevation to join in the world's quarrels, as *ally of Babylon!* a warning to the church. As the world has seen a Pagan and a Papal persecution, so it shall witness an infidel persecution under the little horn of the fourth kingdom, along with the little horn of the third (Dan. vii. 25; xi. 33; xii. 1; Rev. xiii. 15—17). The Papacy has probably a last phase, in which, having lost its temporal possessions, it will not scruple to go forth as a spiritual power, leaguing itself with democratic anarchy (the last development of the beast) to subvert society; for the false prophet succeeds the harlot. Then, after rocking the social fabric to its basis, its kingdom, and that of the beast, shall perish in the one last vast downfall (Rev. xvi. 13—15; xix. 2, 19, 20). The fourth kingdom's little horn, as a *polity*, (Dan. vii.) will probably culminate in the little horn representing the beast, as an *individual* with the eyes of a man (unsanctified intellect) and a mouth speaking great things; his champion will

the rest shall follow. Blessed be God, the darkest night shall be short, and shall usher in the brightest day, and that the everlasting day. The rage of Satan is great, but his time is short. The kingdom of the beast continues but 'a short space.' From the moment of his full manifestation, after the judgment on the apostate Church, he is doomed to perish, and is therefore called 'the son of perdition.' The saints shall escape the full violence of the last fiery trial, and of the judgment to be inflicted, first on the harlot, then, after the beast's brief reign, on Antichrist; for it is just after the seduction of 'the kings of the earth to the war of that great day of the Lord God Almighty' by the three unclean spirits, and directly before their being gathered

be the third kingdom's little horn (Dan. viii. and xi.), the blasphemous king, or false prophet: the former little horn will be in the West; the latter little horn in the East, and at Jerusalem (2 Thes. ii. 4; Rev. xi. 8). Satan and these two, his representatives, form the wicked *antitrinity*. The little horn of the fourth kingdom is the first beast revived (see Matt. xii. 43—45). 'The beast that was, and is not, and *shall come*' (so the Sinaitic, Vatican, and Alexandrian MSS. read for 'and yet is:' πάρεσται), mimicking Jehovah 'who is, was, and is to come.' The little horn of the third kingdom is the false prophet or second beast, ministering to the revived first beast, after the harlot has been made desolate. Compare Rev. xix. 20 with xiii. 12, 13. The heathenishness of the beast, for a time removed by the deadly wound, shall return when it has been healed (Rev. xiii. 3, 12, 14, 15; xvii. 8—11).

into Armageddon, that the Lord marks the time of His translating His elect, by saying, 'Behold I come as a thief. Blessed is he that watcheth and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame' (Rev. xvi. 14—16). When the hearts of worldlings are failing for fear, in looking after those things which are coming on the earth, believers can look up and lift up their heads, for their redemption draweth nigh (Luke xxi. 26, 28). Meanwhile let us, by the cross of Christ, be crucified to the world, and have the world crucified unto us, that so we 'may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man' (Luke xxi. 36).

VI.

THE CHURCH, THE LAMB'S WIFE, MANIFESTED WITH HIM, REIGNING OVER THE WORLD.

'*Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years*' (Rev. xx. 6).

WE saw in the previous discourses how the Church visible has apostatized to the world, and how the world, the instrument of her sin, is retributively made the instrument of her punishment. But amidst the apostasy of the outward Church, God has in all ages had a faithful few who constitute the true Church. The pure bride has lain hid comparatively among the masses of hollow professors who constitute the harlot. As there was a Noah and an Enoch in the antediluvian apostasy, a Joshua and a Caleb in unbelieving Israel,—an Elijah and the seven thousand who bowed not the knee to Baal, when all others followed Ahab in forsaking Jehovah—

even so now also, and till our Lord shall come again, 'there is a remnant according to the election of grace.' To this remnant He promises, 'Fear not, little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom' (Luke xii. 32).

We will consider some of the truths revealed to us of that coming Kingdom: I. Its establishment on the earth during the thousand years foretold. II. Its final and everlasting state.

I. Satan, we saw, at first sought to destroy the Kingdom of God by persecution; but the saints overcame on the ground of the blood of the Lamb, and the word of their testimony, and their not loving their lives unto death (Rev. xii. 11). Next, after succeeding in corrupting the outward Church, he failed utterly in seducing the pure, invisible Church. For after the world had executed God's judgment on the harlot by the beast, then the God-opposed beast or Antichrist stood forth in all his naked blasphemy against God and His Christ; but when Antichrist and the ten subordinate Kings and their hosts make war with the Lamb, the Lamb overcomes them, as being Lord of lords, and King of kings (xvii. 14). Moreover, so far is Satan from succeeding against the true Church, hidden beneath the apostate Church, that the saints of that true Church accompany

the Lamb, and with Him inflict the decisive stroke on Antichrist. 'They that are with the Lamb are called, chosen and faithful,' 'the armies in heaven followed Him, clothed in fine linen, white and clean' (xvii. 14; xix. 14).

Satan, therefore, being foiled in his last desperate attempt to overthrow Christ's Kingdom by Antichrist, shall by the just law of retributive consequence be bound himself for a thousand years in the bottomless pit. For as Satan and his kingdom by successive stages sink, Christ and His Kingdom rise. On the same just principle they who have suffered for Christ, and not worshipped the God-opposed world-power, shall come to life again, and reign with Christ at His coming for the thousand years.* As the world was the instrument of punishing the apostate Church, which forsook her Lord for it; so royal dominion over the

* *Ten*, the world number, raised to the *third* power, the Divine number, expresses *the world pervaded by God.* As each seventh year was the year of remission in Israel, so of the earth's seven thousands, the seventh will be its sabbatism (Heb. iv. 9, Margin). Papias, Justin Martyr, Irenæus and Cyprian expected an earthly millennial kingdom. Not till Chiliasts confounded the state of the transfigured king-priests with that of the subject nations in the flesh, and the Church itself sought a visible present kingdom, with Rome as its centre, instead of looking for it only when Christ shall come, was the doctrine abandoned by the *Church*, and apostasy rapidly set in.

world is the meet reward of the faithful who denied worldly lusts for the sake of their Lord. Satan thought to destroy first Christ, then His people by persecutions; but the true Church is not destroyed from the earth; nay, it is raised to rule over the earth. It is Satan himself who is cast out from the earth: and as by Christ's ascension, Satan ceased to be the accuser of the brethren in heaven (Rev. xii. 10—12), so by Christ's personal manifestation on earth, Satan during the millennium ceases to be the seducer and persecutor on earth. As long as the prince of the power of the air rules in the darkness of this world (Eph. ii. 2; vi. 12), we live in an atmosphere tainted with evil, physical and spiritual. Christ will come to purify the world (Mal. iii. 3. Matt iii. 12). 'The Son of man shall send forth His angels, and they shall gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend and them which do iniquity' (Matt. xiii. 41).

This earth, which was from the beginning designed to be His inheritance (Ps. ii. 8), and which through Satan's subtlety, and man's sin, and the Saviour's love, has been the scene of our Lord's humiliation, shall be the seat of His Kingdom of glory. Our great High Priest will then come forth from the heavenly Holy of holies to bless us. And upon this very earth it

shall be shown, that Satan, once the prince of this world through man's sin, was but an usurper, and that Christ is the only rightful King (Acts iii. 20, 21).

The dead in Christ shall rise first. Their resurrection is 'the first resurrection.' 'The rest of the dead live not again until the thousand years are finished.' The language is unmistakeably clear. None but the saints share in the resurrection which precedes the thousand years. 'Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection, on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and Christ, and shall reign with Him a thousand years.' It is the appointed reward of suffering with Christ on earth, that we should reign with Christ over the earth. 'If we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him; if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him.'* Reigning with Christ is the peculiar privilege of those now suffering with Christ.

As at Mount Sinai Jehovah employed angels to ordain the law when He was establishing His

* (2 Tim. ii. 11—13.) The symmetrical form, and the rhythmical balance of the parallel clauses, imply that this 'saying' was an accepted formula or hymn of the Church. Συναπεθάνομεν implies *a state once for all entered into*, when we took Christ's discipleship, involving a daily *deadness* to the world with Him (*1 Cor.* xv. 31. 2 Cor. iv. 10. Phil. iii. 10).

theocracy over Israel (Deut. xxxiii. 2. Gal. iii. 19. Heb. iii. 2), so at His manifestation, the saints with transfigured bodies shall administer the Kingdom for and under Him. As these shall 'reign,' they must have *subjects*. The nations of the earth, and Israel the foremost of them, shall be subjects of the Lord and His saints.

The mistake of the Chiliasts was, they restricted the Kingdom to the earthly part. Besides the terrestrial glory of Israel and the nations in the flesh, there shall be the heavenly glory of the transfigured saints reigning over the earth. The four *living creatures* * who represent the full number of the redeemed, and the twenty-four elders, the Twelve Patriarchal heads of the Old Testament with the Twelve Apostolical heads of the New Testament, sing the new song to the Lamb (Rev. v. 9), 'Thou hast redeemed us to God by Thy blood out of every kindred, and hast made us† unto our God kings and priests, and we shall reign *over* the earth' (ἐπὶ

* Not 'beasts,' as English version, which would be θηρία, but ζῶα.

† Alexandr. Vatican, Sinait. MSS. Vulg. Syr. and Coptic versions read 'them' for 'us,' which is more graphic and modest (Bengel). Sinait., Vulg. and Copt. read '*they* shall reign.' Alex. and Vat. MSS., '*they reign*.' But Paul denies we reign *now* (1 Cor. iv. 8—13). If the Present tense be the right reading, it is the *prophetical* present, the seer being transported into the future.

τῆς γῆς). 'The meek shall then inherit the earth' (Matt. v. 5). Caleb inherited the very Mount Hebron on which his feet had trodden forty years before, when he alone was faithful among the faithless spies and people. So the saints shall inherit that very earth where they alone have been loyal to the heavenly King whom all others have rejected. That the scene of their reign shall be this earth is clearly marked by Daniel (vii. 27): 'The Kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the Kingdom under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High.'

Though ruling *over* the earth, the transfigured saints shall not necessarily or continuously remain *on* the earth. They shall hold such blessed communion with mortals as Christ, Moses, and Elias, in glory, had with Peter, James, and John, in the flesh, at the transfiguration. That wonderful scene was a miniature prefiguration of the millennial reign. As Elias, translated without death, represents the saints found living, and at the Lord's coming transfigured, and as Moses represents the sleeping saints then raised

when the full number of the elect shall be complete; when the seventh trumpet shall sound, and the Kingdom shall come on earth. The *time* and *locality* of the *Kingdom* are given in Rev. *xi. 15, 18.*

to share the blessedness of the first resurrection, so Peter, James, and John, represent the nations in the flesh. These, like Peter who said, 'Lord, it is good for us to be here,'* shall rejoice in the felt blessedness of frequent communion with the Lord Himself and His glorified Saints. There shall be a far freer fellowship than now between the earthly and the heavenly Church. The type is afforded in the frequent and happy intercourse of the Lord with His disciples during the forty days after His resurrection. The transfigured saints shall feel it a sweet joy to lead their brethren on earth to the same Saviour whose preciousness they themselves know in all its fulness. Their power is that of attraction, winning all hearts in the day of the Lord's power (Ps. cx. 3), not counteracted by devil or beast. The heavenly transfigured ones are elected not merely for their own good, and salvation, but to rule in love, and to minister blessings over the earth as its king-priests, unto

* (Matt. xvii. 4.) 'If Thou wilt, let us make here three *tabernacles*, one for Thee, one for Moses, and one for Elias.' Is there here an unconscious foreshadowing of the millennial feast of *tabernacles* (Zech. xiv. 16, 18, 19) thrice mentioned? also possibly in the prophetical Psalm, cxviii. 15. Peter with undesigned coincidence uses two of the words used in the Gospel concerning the transfiguration, which he makes the pledge of Christ's coming Kingdom (2 Pet. i. 14, 15). Ἔξοδος, 'decease' (Luke ix. 31), and 'tabernacle.'

God and His Christ. St. John saith, that, instead of the Devil, over the earth, the transfigured Church,—Daniel says, that instead of the heathenish beast, on the earth, the holy Israel—shall rule (Dan. vii. 27).

The privilege of this our high calling in Christ is limited to the present time of Satan's reign. When he shall have been bound, there will be no further opportunity to suffer for, so as afterwards to reign with Christ. His word now is (Rev. iii. 21), 'To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with Me on My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne.' None in our age are saved by Christ, who shall not also reign with Christ. If we fail to gain the crown of service, we have had no part in the gift of grace. The martyrs are put foremost, because most like Jesus in suffering unto death: 'I saw thrones and the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus and for the Word of God, and which (οἵτινες, all whosoever) had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years.' The highest place of honour is for those who in will or deed drink His cup of suffering and temptation (Matt. xx. 22, 23;

Luke xxii. 28—30). Next shall be all who have not given their allegiance to the world-power, but to the Lord and Saviour, looking at the things not seen and eternal. Paul, who was beheaded at Rome for the truth, shall then attain his one grand ambition, 'that I may know Christ and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, if by any means I may attain the resurrection from out of the rest of the dead' (ἐξανάστασις found only in Phil. iii. 11). John, who was banished to Patmos for the word of God and for the testimony of Jesus Christ, as he was companion of the saints in the tribulation and patience in (so Sinait. Alexandr. and Vatican MSS., Rev. i. 9) Jesus Christ, so shall he be in the glory. It is our Lord's own promise, 'Ye that have followed Me, in the regeneration,* when the Son of man shall sit upon the throne of His glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, and every one that hath forsaken houses, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for My name's sake,

* Παλιγγενεσία is only found elsewhere in Tit. iii. 5, 'the laver of regeneration.' The new birth begins now in the *soul* by the Holy Spirit. At Christ's coming it will be extended to the *body* of the saints by the same Spirit; and at the burning up of the present earth and its atmosphere it will be extended also to our *home* (2 Pet. iii. 13. Rev. xxi. 1).

shall receive an hundredfold, and shall inherit everlasting life' (Matt. xix. 28). Thus, in exact proportion to our faithfulness, as being already the servants of Christ saved only by grace, shall be the degree of our reward. He who with one pound shall have made ten pounds for his Lord, shall receive the Master's proportionate award of rule. 'Well, thou good servant,—have thou rule over ten cities.' He who shall have made five pounds with his Master's one pound, shall receive rule over five cities (Luke xix. 15—19). As the vessels of glory are of larger or smaller dimensions, so shall each receive a larger or smaller measure of glory. Each vessel shall be filled full of blessing. But the larger the heart has been, the greater its capacity for blessedness (Isa. xxii. 24. 2 Tim. ii. 21).

The Lord Jesus, whilst opposing the Jews' expectation of an immediate carnal kingdom, confirms the Old Testament view of the coming earthly Jewish kingdom of glory. When the disciples asked, 'Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?' (Acts i. 6), He confirmed their expectation of the Kingdom, but corrected their impatient curiosity to know the time. 'It is not for you to know the *times* or the *seasons*.' Beginning from within, and spreading now spiritually, the Kingdom shall

manifest itself outwardly at Christ's appearing. It was by seeking to reign as kings without Christ (1 Cor. iv. 8), in the present Satan-oppressed world, that the Church ceased to be the bride going forth to meet her Bridegroom, and became the world-supported harlot. The rights forfeited by the harlot shall be exercised in holiness by the bride. Apostate Christendom being destroyed, and the faithful Church translated, there will remain Israel and the nations which, not having heard the Gospel, are guiltless of rejecting it. The glories of Christ's appearing, the destruction of Antichrist, the Church's transfiguration, and the binding of Satan, will prepare these for becoming 'the Kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ' (Rev. xi. 15). The 'veil' shall be taken off Israel first (2 Cor. iii. 14, 15), then from off 'all people' (Isa. xxv. 7). As *individual* regeneration goes on now, so a 'regeneration' of *nations* then. Israel, as a nation, shall be 'born in one day' (Isa. lxvi. 8). As the spiritual Church began at Christ's ascension, so the *Kingdom* will commence at His coming again.

Revelation has been silent during Israel's rejection. All the Scriptures were written by Israelites. Revelation will recommence (Ps. l. 2, 3, 5) when Israel, restored to communion with

her King shall head humanity. For Israel is the mediator of divine revelations to men in all ages. The Jew and the Gentile stand on the same footing, as both alike needing mercy (Rom. x. 12). But in establishing His *Kingdom on earth*, Israel is His chosen people. The Israelite Priest-Kings on earth will minister to the nations, as the transfigured Priest-Kings from heaven minister to them and men in general. There will be a blessed chain of giving and receiving; God, Christ, the transfigured Bride, that is the Church, Israel, and the world of nations. Earthly and heavenly glories shall be united in the twofold election. Elect Israel in the flesh shall head the earthly; Christ, the elect spiritual Church, shall head the heavenly. Revelation will begin again after its long silence by the outpouring of the Spirit on Israel (Zech. xii. 10).

The Spirit now works as the hidden life within believers (Col. iii. 3). But then that life shall manifest itself outwardly. Now is the time of preaching; then the time of *liturgy* of 'the great congregation' shall come (Ps. xxii. 25; xxxv. 18; xl. 9, 10). Art, Science, and Society, being thoroughly pervaded by Christ and His Spirit, will no longer, as now, draw off the soul from spiritual religion to sensuousness, but will be handmaids to spiritu-

ality. Now attempts to combine elaborate music and painting with worship often degrade spiritual service. How hard too it is to keep the mind from wandering in prayer and praise! Then all hearts and mouths together shall serve the Lord. The world shall be coextensive with the Church, and the Church with the world. Whilst the *radical principle* of the Epistle to the Hebrews shall remain intact, the spiritual depths and pregnant significance of the sacrificial law of Israel shall be developed in the restored temple (Ezek. xl.—xlvii. Matt. v. 17—19. Ps. xxii. 25—28. Zech. xiv. 9, 16—21).

The Lord's throne shall be in Israel's and the world's metropolis: as Jeremiah foretells (iii. 17), 'At that time they shall call Jerusalem the throne of Jehovah; and all nations shall be gathered unto it, to the Name of Jehovah, to Jerusalem.' Christ's King-priesthood (Zech. vi. 13) shall then be explained in the services of the glorious temple at Jerusalem. Then also the Song of Solomon, so obscure now, shall fully answer to the experience of the Church. For the marriage of the Lamb and the Bride shall be begun in heaven; and Jehovah shall be manifested as Israel's Husband on earth (Isa. liv. 5—17). These shall be 'the times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord, when He shall

send Jesus,' to usher in 'the times of the restitution of all things which God hath spoken by the mouth of His holy prophets since the world began' (Acts iii. 19—21).

Our present defective governments shall give place to perfect rule in Church and State. The Divine theocracy shall supersede the misrule of earthly potentates who have ruled for self, and too little for the glory of God and the good of man. Under the Old Testament Israel exclusively enjoyed, in the New Testament the Gentiles chiefly enjoy the knowledge of God. But then the whole human race, as an organic whole, with Israel as the first-born and the centre, according to God's ordinance from the first (Gen. ix. 25—27; x. 1, 5, 18, 25, 32. Deut. xxxii. 8), shall walk in His light, realizing the full life of humanity. Even nature in part, and the animal kingdom, will share in the millennial blessedness. 'The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf, and the young lion, and the fatling together, and a little child shall lead them—they shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain; for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of Jehovah, as the waters cover the sea' (Isa. xi. 6—9; lxv. 25). It shall be a time of Sabbath peace, uninterrupted by the restless internal turmoils of states, and by

wars without, for 'they shall beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks: Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more' (Isa. ii. 4).

II. *The final and everlasting state.*—Even during the millennium there is a separation between heaven and earth, between humanity transfigured and humanity in the flesh. The fleshly element is the one source of temptation still left, though much circumscribed; Satan and the worldly element are in abeyance. Death, therefore, the wages of sin, occurs, but at remote intervals: as Isaiah (lxv. 20) prophesies, 'There shall be no more an infant of days, nor an old man that hath not filled his days: for the child shall die an hundred years old, but the sinner being an hundred years old shall be accursed;' that is, his death at so early an age as a hundred, shall be regarded as God's special visitation in wrath. The flesh shall thus be the one element through which Satan can make one last desperate effort in person to deceive the nations, and to regain the kingdom of the earth.

The nations generally will have been prepared in the millennium for a higher state, as Adam would have been in Paradise, had he never fallen: as it is written of the final state, 'The

nations of them which are saved, shall (in the new heaven and new earth) walk in the light of the heavenly city; and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it' (Rev. xxi. 1, 24). But Satan will previously succeed in beguiling into treason against the heavenly King several nations in the four quarters of the millennial earth, the antitypes to the Gog and Magog of Ezekiel (xxxviii., xxxix). Fire from God out of heaven destroys the daring rebels who compass the beloved city. The day of grace then ends; and none other shall succeed. For what further influence could move those whom the Church's visible glory, amidst an atmosphere of good, with no temptations to evil from without, during the millennium, could not attract to the Church's gracious King?

The fire that consumes the apostate nations ushers in the general conflagration that consumes the earth and its atmosphere, succeeded by the final judgment. As the earth was once baptized with a flood of water, so shall it then be baptized with fire (2 Pet. iii. 10—13). As the believer's soul is now being regenerated with the Holy Spirit; and as the believer's body shall be regenerated by the same Holy Spirit at Christ's coming, so at the close of the millennial reign,

the earth, the believer's home, shall be regenerated by the same mighty power. The taint of the flesh which had adhered to it even in the millennium, shall then be purged out with fire: just as the leper's house had to be taken down because of the plague adhering to it. Then shall emerge, at God's command, the new heaven and new earth wherein shall dwell righteousness. The saints shall then not merely reign from heaven *over* the earth; but the holy Jerusalem shall descend upon the earth out of heaven from God, having the glory of God, and far eclipsing the millennial Jerusalem of Israel. As a jasper-coloured lamp with flame shining through from within, so God Himself in the midst of His saints shall cause His glory to shine out through them (Rev. xxi. 9—12). The Church shall be no longer the Bride, but the Wife of the Lamb. Earth and nature shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, and shall be regenerated, as the nations previously were in the millennium. The groans of nature shall be hushed for ever. Satan shall be loosed no more. There shall no more be the restless sea, literal or figurative (Dan. vii. 2, 3. Isa. lvii. 20. Rev. xxi. 1, 4). No more pain, no more crying, no more death; above all no apostasy, no more sin. The

saints shall be under the blessed necessity of sinning no more.

Moreover, when Christ shall have accomplished the purpose of His mediatorial kingdom by bringing all rule, authority, and power into subjection to the Father, and shall have put all enemies, including the last enemy Death, under His feet, He will deliver up the Kingdom to the Father, and God will be all in all. The unity of the Godhead will then be prominent, as the offices of His Trinity in relation to us are now so: 'His name will be one,' and He will then first come into direct communion with His redeemed (1 Cor. xv. 24. Zech. xiv. 9). 'The tabernacle of God shall be with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and shall be their God.'

The thousand years were the transition stage from the old heavens and earth to the new heavens and earth. The millennial earth was not the dwelling of the transfigured saints, but the kingdom over which they reigned. But the regenerated earth is their abiding home; and they themselves become the city of God, who dwells among them, and whose face they see, and whose name they bear in their forehead. In it is the river of water of life, clear as crystal,

proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb, and in the midst of the street, on either side of the river, the tree of life yielding its fruit in all months, and the very leaves being for the healing of the nations. There shall be no temple there; for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the temple of it (Rev. xxi. 22; xxii.). Church ordinances will give place to the God of ordinances, when the saints shall enjoy uninterrupted and immediate communion with God and the Lamb.

Thus we have traced the wonderful scheme of God for the Church's final glory through Christ, after her conflict with the world and its prince. The Paradise regained shall exceed the Paradise lost, as much as the second Adam, the Lord from heaven, exceeds the first. The Church regenerated in body as well as soul, and one with the glorious God in the regenerated earth, shall far exceed man, even as he was at creation. The Bible, like a mighty circle returning into itself, exhibits man at the close under circumstances resembling, but surpassing in bliss, his first state as recorded in the beginning. As Genesis commenced 'In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,' so Revelation closes with 'I saw a new heaven and a new earth.' Satan was victorious over man in

the beginning; at the close, Satan is cast by the Son of man into the lake of fire. At the beginning, sin brought the curse; at the close, it is written, 'There shall be no more curse' (Rev. xxii. 3). Death then reigned through sin: Life now shall reign through righteousness, and 'there shall be no more death' (xxi. 4). The guilty pair then were shut out from the tree of life: now at the consummation, the saved have access to it in all months. Night was joined with each day at the beginning: at the end Revelation twice declares, 'there shall be no night there' (xxi. 25; xxii. 5). No darkness, no need of candle, no need of the sun and moon appointed at the first to give light to the earth: 'for the Lord God giveth them light, and they shall reign for ever and ever' (xxii. 5). These are no dream of an excited imagination. They are the revelation of God who cannot lie. Our high calling is to be waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body: 'looking for that blessed hope and the epiphany of the glory of Him who is the great God and our Saviour.'*

* Tit. ii. 13. *ἐπιφάνειαν τῆς δόξης τοῦ μεγάλου θεοῦ καὶ σωτῆρος.* The one article to both 'God' and 'Saviour' shows both are predicated of the same Being. 'Epiphany' is never by Paul predicated of the *Father*. The context refers only to Jesus. The designation 'Great God' is appropriate to Christ, the glory of His appearing as 'the Great God' contrasting with His *humility in* 'giving Himself for us.'

And as 'He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly, Amen,'—so may our hearts respond, 'Even so come quickly, Lord Jesus!' (Rev. xxii. 20).

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